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THE CROPPY.

A Tale.

BY THE O'HARA FAMILY.

[Michael Banim]

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO SHEFFIELD GRACE, ESQ.,

F. S. A., &c.

My Dear Sir,

One of the first Anglo-Norman knights who visited Ireland was your ancestor. His descendants identified themselves with the land of his adoption, and chiefly on that account suffered much at different times. With some propriety, therefore, a tale illustrative of the more recent results of misrule in your native country, may be inscribed to you. The compliment is also due to your individual love of Ireland, to your erudite knowledge of her history, and as a slight acknowledgment of many kindnesses conferred on

THE O'HARA FAMILY.

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THE CROPPY;

A TALE OF 1798.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

Introductory and historical, and not comprising a word of the Tale to which it leads; so that some readers will probably pass it by; and yet we intreat all who wish really to understand even the more fictitious parts of our story, to give it an indulgent and careful perusal.

Few can forget that, in the year 1798, a wide-spread conspiracy, which partially exploded, existed amongst Irishmen of every rank and sect,—having in view a separation from England, and the establishing, upon the ruins of British dominion, an Irish Republic.

The name adopted by the conspirators was that of United Irishmen; but as this name was inherited by them, the necessary task of explaining its nature and import cannot be accomplished without tracing it from its source.

In 1777, Britain was engaged in the war with her Colonies. France, entering into alliance with America, had sent the soldiers of her despotic monarchy to fight for republicanism. England, in want of troops, withdrew her garrisons from Ireland, in order to transport them over the Atlantic. Ireland then remained without an army to protect her against a threatened French invasion. She demanded succour from England, and understood that she must defend herself.

The Irish flew to arms. In a short time, a great national force, self-raised, self-armed, self-equipped, and well-disciplined, stood forward to meet the expected foe. None appeared; but had the contrary been the case, such was the steady though chivalrous spirit of military ardour, pervading the country from north to south, that, in any struggle with an invading enemy, Ireland must have triumphed. The Irish Volunteers were acknowledged by the legislature as "the saviours of their country."

In order to become a volunteer, certain outlays, requiring considerable means, were to be incurred; hence, the volunteer ranks

were composed of those classes who, by habits or education, are raised above the mere headlong zeal of the multitude:—they were reflecting citizens, as well as chivalrous soldiers.

Church of England Protestants, Presbyterians, and Roman Catholics, stood side by side in this national band. Under the old penal code, then in almost full force, persons of the last-mentioned persuasion could not, indeed, legally bear arms;—nay, in some instances in the North, their offers of service were coldly or offensively repulsed: but this disrelish to fight for country or home by their side, was by no means general; the terrors of the Statute-book by no means damped their own ardour; and now, forgetting the clank of their chains in the rattling of arms, they appeared members of almost every corps in the kingdom.

Having scared away from their shores England's most formidable enemy, the Volunteers continued to be the only army of their country: and, in the absence of opportunity for the exercise of their military character, they began to contemplate, as politicians, the position of that country. Her legislature and her trade first fixed their attention. The one they found destitute of the power of real enactment; the other they found grievously restricted; and they petitioned for the emancipation of both. England, still without troops to support a refusal, acceded to their demands. In 1782, Ireland owed to her armed citizens of every sect, an independent Parliament and a free trade. The steady union of her children made her a nation.

The independence of their legislature thus secured, the Volunteers turned their eyes to the construction of that legislature itself.

Presbyterian Ulster had set the example of uniting the deliberative and military characters. The first imposing assemblage, in which the soldier, leaning on his musket, debated the politics of his country, consisted exclusively of volunteer delegates from that province. It was followed up, in Dublin, by a meeting of representatives of all the corps of Ireland, who, in imitation of the American Assembly, called themselves a Congress; and from this body emanated a petition for reform in Parliament.

But England could now more safely refuse. Her transatlantic warfare was ended; she had troops at command; and the prayer of the Irish "Congress" was promptly and disdainfully rejected.

The Reformers, boasting of their physical power to enforce compliance, renewed and increased their clamour. They were firmly answered. A war of words ensued; they branding the legislature as corrupt and odious; and the legislature, in return, attributing to them disloyal principles, and classing them with the French anarchists, whose first sanguinary acts then began, unluckily for the cause of legitimate freedom, to disgust the world.

Omitting the details of this struggle of the two parties, it will be convenient for our purpose to pass from 1784 to 1792, and exa-

mine the position and state of the Volunteers at the latter mentioned period. And, at a glance, we find them, from many causes, decreased in numbers, influence, and importance.

In the first petition for an independent Parliament and a free trade, every Volunteer, from the landed proprietor to the mechanic, had felt a common interest; but in that for Parliamentary reform, many aristocratic members of the national army, who held seats in the Lower House, did not conceive that their interests were regarded; and in consequence, they ceased to be Volunteers. Other moderate men, fearful of being classed by Government amongst those whom it denounced as enemies, seceded, with a prudent foresight, to save themselves from future results: some rallying, heart and hand, round King and Constitution; some forming themselves into an aristocratic body, called the Whig Club, which, as it too professed reforming views, though of a limited kind, could not have failed to divide their own ranks against the Volunteers. But the chief cause for the breaking up of the old Volunteer spirit remains to be noticed.

Although Roman Catholics had generally been admitted into the national band, a very considerable portion of their fellow-soldiers,—almost all, in fact, professing the established religion,—never contemplated making them the better for any political advantages which they were to assist in attaining. They might aid, for instance, in securing an independent Parliament, but should not be permitted to vote at the election of its members; much less to aspire to the honour of being members of it themselves. In 1792, the Presbyterian portion of the diminished body of Volunteers, (diminished by causes glanced at above,)—were willing, perhaps out of policy to recruit their ranks, as well as from higher motives, to join to their demand for Parliamentary reform, a prayer for Catholic relief. The defection instantly followed of all who regarded such a measure with inherited prejudice, or who conscientiously deemed its success incompatible with the existence of Church and State; or who merely felt it opposed to their individual interests; and, joining together, they formed a body, styled "Protestant Ascendancy," of which the principles, put forward in the shape of a manifesto, by the consistent corporate monopolists of the capital, breathed against Roman Catholics utter exclusion from civil and political privileges.

Government did not fail to take advantage of their disunion more effectually to suppress the Volunteers. A force, called Fencibles, was raised expressly for the purpose of overawing them; and this manifest wish to get rid of the Volunteers, deprived them of the last peaceable adherents who considered implicit obedience as a duty. Through many parts of the South of Ireland, too, corps threw up their arms in disgust. The legislature had called them "the saviours of their country;" it now called them incendiaries;

and personal, if not national pride could not brook the change of opinion. And from these different causes we behold, in 1792, but a skeleton of the national body which, with spirit to wield its strength, and with mind to direct that spirit, had, a few years before, been so imposing. We behold, in fact, a people whom union had made formidable to others, and of service to their country, grown, by disunion, contemptible to the world, and party with party, as they stand, a curse to their country. Forsaking their national standard, we see them once more ranged, in almost rabble groups, under the old tattered banners which, during her miserable contentions of six hundred years, had fluttered, like scarecrows, over Ireland, to put to flight all national peace, all collective, and much of individual importance, and to "fright the isle from her prosperity."

But, generally speaking, the corps of the Ulster Presbyterians, together with some corps in Dublin, retained their muskets and field-pieces, and attended to military exercise at the same time that they formed themselves into new combinations.

Belfast, the capital of the Protestant North, first gave birth to political clubs, which, in imitation of similar ones in France and England, sought, by means of correspondence, publication, and otherwise, to disseminate beyond their own circle, opinions upon the Government under which they lived. One of similar character followed them in Dublin; and, long after the year 1792, to this city, and to Belfast such associations were almost exclusively limited.

Their members, in both places, may emphatically be termed the last of the Volunteers. The declared objects of all were, a full Reform in Parliament, and a full emancipation of Roman Catholics. And the title adopted by them, in 1792, and now first fixed, was that of United Irishmen.

It can scarce be doubted that their leaders contemplated, even in the outset, a separation from England. Many of them were republicans in principle; and late treatises serve to show that their alleged objects were advanced but as a false flag, under which to marshal the timid or wavering of their own sect, and, if possible, the neutral Catholics, who even then formed three-fourths of the population of Ireland, until events, contrived or expected, might gradually adapt all to views of a more extended nature.

The expected events rapidly occurred. Republican France triumphed over the combined armies of Europe; and her success served at once to indicate, and to propose to others for adoption, the principle for which she fought and conquered. Along with conviction, it inspired boldness, too; and hence, no doubt, the United Irish Clubs imbibed their confirmed hostility to English dominion in Ireland, as well as the audacious tone of denunciation and defiance which breathed through their published sentiments,

whether put forth in the shape of resolutions or pamphlets, both eloquently penned, against the existing order of things.

At length matters came for the present to a crisis. Under the very eye of "the Castle," appeared in Dublin an armed band, styling themselves, in almost avowedly republican phrase, Irish National Guards. They wore green uniform, the national colour; and their standard was a harp, without a crown. Upon a particular day they were to muster, as if to show their strength. The Lord Lieutenant issued his proclamation against such a meeting; the garrison of Dublin prepared to support his manifesto; and the National Guards had no review-day.

A previous identity between this band and the United Irish Clubs is not proved; but such identification seems to have soon taken place. Against the Lord Lieutenant's proclamation, the Dublin Club issued a counter proclamation, approving and encouraging the National Guards. The secretary, who signed the paper, was convicted of sedition. After the publication of another philippic against Government, a meeting of the United Irish of Dublin was dismissed by the sheriff, as persons holding seditious and republican views;* and thus, in 1794, terminated the legal existence of the last of the Volunteers of 1782; convened, under their new name, two years and a half previously.

But though the Republican clubs were thus legally suppressed, their spirit was not wholly extinguished. In Dublin, indeed, no trace of them existed; but in Belfast, to which we must still refer for a persevering adherence to the cause, one club of United Irish, which from its insignificance had not attracted notice, continued clandestinely to meet: and by it, consisting exclusively of persons below the middle ranks of life, was first organized, and brought to a pitch of subtle perfection, that able and instructed men, its subsequent adherents, could not improve, the more regular conspiracy against English connexion, which, in the year 1798, partially broke forth in different districts of Ireland.

Not till two years after their new constitution were the members of this confederacy joined in Dublin by the influential persons who had composed the former and more open Clubs; and not till the close of 1797 did the conspiracy make any considerable progress in the South of Ireland. In other words, the Roman Catholic force of the country did not become United Irishmen, before that period.

But many of their superiors, of the same religious persuasion,

* Nor was the charge made on light grounds. A Protestant clergyman, the Rev. Wm. Jackson, had, through the treacherous agency of a London attorney, Cockaigne, (a good name for a London attorney,) been detected, in Dublin, in the character of a French emissary to the discontented Irish.

had, some time previously, joined, from various causes, the councils of the Protestant revolutionists.

Before the upraising of the national voice, by the old Volunteers in 1782, the Catholics had considered themselves, as on all hands they were considered, an unimportant portion, though by far the greater portion, of the Irish people. A century of degradation, under the overwhelming pressure of the penal code, naturally imparted to them this instinct of insignificance. Shackles sink the slave in his own estimation, as well as in that of his master. Even for their rights, they had not dared to speak out, as a body. Any murmur that escaped them was but the unheard whisper of a fear. But inspired, doubtless, by the manful appeals of their Protestant fellow-countrymen, they began, after the year 1792, more boldly to approach the legislature. A petition for relief appeared from their body, which now became newly and formidably organized; and, although it was indignantly rejected, still, nearly at the same time, Government introduced a bill repealing some of the most odious of the penal statutes. Their junction with the Reformers was apprehended; and, while nothing would be granted to their presumptuous request, something was voluntarily vouchsafed to keep them quiet.

The courage of the Catholics, and most of all its partial success, after centuries of terrified inaction and passive slavery, caused a great ferment among the "Protestant Ascendancy:" and never, perhaps, even in Ireland, did ferment more vigorously manifest itself. At city and county meetings convened by sheriffs, at grand-jury sittings, and corporation meetings and guilds, not only were manifestoes against Catholic freedom agreed to, but vituperation of Catholic tenets was indulged in. All that could offend and goad, as well as all that could defeat, marked the clamour of the interested monopolists. The Catholics, to the increased astonishment of their hitherto colonial masters, retorted in publications which paid abuse with abuse, and absolutely attacked, in turn, the theology of their political anathematists. "Ascendancy" rejoinders followed, in which some individuals connected with Government took a part; and the Catholic saw, that from the dominant party of the land, they had no chance of favour.

Still, however, they remained unconnected, as a body, with the other party; and, in 1793, made a grand effort to rise beyond the clamour and intrigues of their domestic enemies, by carrying their petitions to the very foot of the throne. Their success, considering it as a first attempt in diplomacy, was surprising. At first refused the ear even of the secretary, in London, they ultimately wrought their way, by perseverance and cleverness, to the presence of the Sovereign himself; were most graciously received; obtained the royal promise that their prayer should be recommended; and, at

the close of the year, additional concessions—much short of their hopes, however—were granted to them.

Louder than ever arose the angry voice of the Ascendancy men; all means of defeat were set to work; and the exclusionists at last seemed to triumph. The determination to limit relief to the concessions already made, was authoritatively promulgated: and, all future hope thus shut out, under the existing order of things, the Catholics began to turn their eyes towards the friends who, though also differing from them in creed, promised, under a proposed change, to grant them full and equal privileges.

Whilst, with a few exceptions, Catholics of intellect and consideration still, however, held back, a well-known event precipitated them into a junction with the United Irish. In 1795, Earl Fitzwilliam became chief governor of Ireland, upon the understanding that, while going certain lengths to satisfy the Protestant Reformers, he was to grant complete relief to Catholics. The Irish people were allowed to believe that the day of grace was now indeed at hand. But, so soon as the war supplies had been voted, Lord Fitzwilliam received a summons to return to England; the promises he had been allowed to hold out were broken; the vivid hopes of the Catholic leaders changed into blank despair; and while the triumphant shouts of the "Ascendancy" rang in their ears, many of them became, through mixed feelings of wrath and self-assertion, sworn enemies of the national connexion which seemed to doom them to perpetual insult and inferiority.

The previous policy of the United Irish Clubs must have produced, to a certain extent, this final result. Their very name was an invitation to Catholics to join them. Their published sentiments, as well as declared objects, graced and strengthened the invitation. Privately, socially, and upon every possible occasion, they farther held out to the people, whose physical strength they knew how to value, the hand of fellowship. The celebrated Wolfe Tone admits, in his autobiography, this system of conciliation. Perhaps it may even be deduced, from his curious statements, that his own appointment, as secretary to the Catholics, was not exclusively the result of Catholic admiration of his talents, and of his zeal in their cause. Catholic leaders were invited to Belfast, to witness a display of Protestant liberality towards them; and the following year, their deputations to the King were induced to make Belfast their route to England, and the Protestant population of that town drew them in their carriages through the streets.

But whilst from the year 1795 may be dated the junction of influential Catholics with the Republicans, the lower orders of their religion did not, as was before remarked, conspire against English connexion till the end of the year 1797. Hence, it will at once be suggested, that the Catholic gentleman and the Catholic peasant

were not urged into the conspiracy by the same causes, or with the same views and feelings; and we proceed to close our very slight historical sketch by showing that they were not. In the ranks of the Volunteers, Protestant hatred of Catholics experienced much alleviation; but amongst the lower orders of Protestants, of whom those ranks comprised few or none, the old spirit of the admirers of Oliver Cromwell or of George Walker continued, nothing the worse for the wear, to manifest itself, in loathing and abhorrence, against the few Catholic peasants left in the thrice-colonized province of Ulster. Between reasoning men of the rival persuasions a philosophical feeling of brotherhood rapidly went on;—their inferiors were, meantime, cutting each others' throats.

In 1785, the county of Armagh became the arena of a petty though cruel warfare. Under the title of "Peep-o'-day-boys," the lower orders of Protestants scoured, in bands, the Catholic districts, and, sanctioned by the penal law, still unrepealed, appropriated all descriptions of Catholic fire-arms. Nor was their zeal always confined to a discharge of this self-conferred, though legal *surveillance*. Insult and outrage were, on such occasions, generally experienced by the proscribed people.

After some years of trembling passiveness, the Catholics formed themselves into counter-associations, of which the very name—"Defenders"—indicates the spirit and nature. Both combinations gradually spread into Connaught and Leinster, and, in 1793, *Defenderism* reached the scene of our tale, the County of Wexford.

But in the provinces mentioned, so far from the point of its origination, and amid a population almost exclusively Catholic, Defenderism diverged from its primary character. Amongst district bodies, in different districts, were vague notions of self-assertion, each provoked by some local grievance, or by exactions deemed to be such. One band of Defenders opposed the payment of tithes, whether legally demanded in the name of the parson, or dictated in the shape of christening and marriage fees, by priests of their own persuasion; other bands rose against the militia ballot, to which the lower orders were not used, and of which they could not understand the justice.

In 1795 the Defenders proceeded to open and ferocious insurrection. They were summarily dealt with. Without trial of any kind, military commanders sent hundreds of them to the fleets. About fourteen hundred were, indeed, thus disposed of, notwithstanding all provisions of British law to the contrary; and an indemnity bill soon screened the law breakers. But the Irish peasant felt that he had been illegally as well as cruelly dealt with; and now was first blended with the wild habits of combination, taught him by the Peep-o'-day-boys, a sentiment of hatred towards that

Government which seemed to depart from its own fixed principles of justice, solely in order to crush him.

During the operation of this system of prompt chastisement, the soldiery had been let loose among the people; and to such an extent was their disorderly violence carried, that the veteran Abercrombie, after a tour of inspection, subsequently described them as "in a state of licentiousness which must render them formidable to every one but the enemy." Again, the southern peasant hated the power which used instruments so sanguinary; revenge upon both became the wish of his heart; and when agents of the United Irish conspiracy found it convenient to make the parish Defender a national revolutionist, he rushed madly into the field, rejoicing in any cause that proposed an opportunity for retaliation, and but too well prepared, by the examples he had been set, to brutalize the name even of civil warfare.

Nor have we yet ascribed all the excitements to the wild outbreak of the Irish peasant in 1798.

Besides the illegal despotism adopted to put down the Defenders of 1795, numbers of them had been executed according to the usual process. Hence it appeared that Defenderism was deemed, by authority, near akin to high treason. The old Peep-o'-day-boys, as professed supporters of Government,—boasting indeed, we know not how truly, of its countenance,—acted upon the hint. With freshened zeal and energy they re-opened the campaign against their fellow countrymen; and now, anxious to profess their loyalty in the very telling of their name, they changed their original title into that of Orangemen—the appellation retained, to the present day, by them, or by their successors.

Having achieved, in a kind of pitched battle, a brilliant victory over the objects of their hate, they professed the intention of banishing from Ulster every professor of the odious creed. Upon the dwellings of such they posted the following notice,—"To hell or Connaught you —— Papist! if you are not gone by —— (a specified day), we will come back and reckon with you; we hate all Papists here!" And if the command was not obeyed, they kept their word; returned; burnt the house or cabin of the disobedient party; compelled him and his family to fly; and thus were hundreds driven from their homes to spread, amongst millions of their own persuasion, the story and the warning, at once, of their individual suffering.

However unfounded might have been the boast of the Orangeman that he acted under high authority, it remained uncontradicted, and the southern as well as the northern peasant took its truth for granted. In common, therefore, with the terror and abhorrence of their old persecutors, now felt by the lower classes of Catholics, arose a confirmed sentiment of hatred towards those who, it was believed, had set them on. Farther, it became credited that the

Orange oath was a horrid covenant, horribly worded, to exterminate Catholics all over Ireland: and the Government, which was supposed to countenance such an oath, as well as the detested party who were supposed to take it, stood forth as joint objects of the mad revenge, and of the frightful mode of conflict, (ere their final rising, again and again inculcated by Orangemen,) of the insurgent peasants of Leinster.

Many were the differences between the inauguration, upon the very eve of warfare, of the Catholic Republican of the South, and that of the original framers of the conspiracy in the North; many were the differences between their views and feelings in the common struggle: but no difference between them is so remarkable, or so melancholy, as the fact that the effort, which had been planned in a spirit of sectarian unanimity, should thus change into a mere religious contest throughout the southern and western parts of Ireland. Previous to the insurrection, almost every Protestant, whether sworn or not, chose to be considered as an Orangeman; by skilful management, in able hands, the badge of that party became a necessary symbol of loyalty; few of the established religion, therefore, from motives of choice or of prudence, as the case might be, appeared abroad without it. The Catholic peasant confounded all the late adherents of his abhorred enemies with the first and worst who had persecuted him; Protestant and Orangeman became, in his mind, synonymous words; and in this delusion he caught up his rude and formidable pike, when, without time being afforded him to reflect, he was precipitated, by United Irish emissaries on the one hand, and by monstrous and wanton outrage on the other, into the *melée* of civil strife.

CHAPTER II.

The summer sun was slanting his evening rays over the meandering Slaney, and casting along the smooth greensward, that sloped to its edge, the lengthened shadow of as fair a form as, that day, in his journey, he had shone upon. She stood looking vaguely and pensively at the water, that dimpled with the curling breeze, like her cheek, and that laughed amid reflected light and azure, like her blue eyes. And it was not to watch the trout-fly disporting in circlets on the surface of the clear river that she looked; nor to catch through crystal depths the bright-eyed trout himself, glancing up like a silver arrow to strike his little prey; nor yet to ad-

mire the inverted landscape, softened by the translucent medium, or quivering into magic confusion by the action of the faint breeze. Remembrance, at one time agitated, at another touched with tenderness; hope, fear, and self-dissatisfaction, might be traced, alternately, on her arched brow; and as she at length sat down on a little knoll, chiefly formed by the bulbing roots of a fine old ash-tree, picking up scraps of crumbled clay, and, as all fair hands are wont to do, throwing them awkwardly into the water, an experienced eye would have pronounced that at such an age, so happy under the paternal roof, and hitherto as noted for innocent vivacity as for grace and beauty, Eliza Hartley, the heiress of Hartley Court, could have had but one cause for her grave abstraction; and that our supposed critic would have been in the right, is shown by the following transcript of her thoughts at the moment. "Do I indeed prefer this stranger? If I do not, I fear I may. Fear?—why should I fear?" She strove to smother a sensation before admitted. "Hold, though; it would very nearly be love at first sight—and can I pretend to inspire *that*?" Doubtfully, as it were, her eyes fell on the water; in the natural mirror, now uncurled by a breeze, they beheld themselves bewitchingly laughing in answer; she looked again; they told her she *was* beautiful, and she believed the story.

"But hold still"—a shade of seriousness overcast her sparkling face, as Eliza continued her soliloquy: "may I not mistake my sentiments for the young Baronet? Did I not once—and very recently too, imagine that I preferred another?" It must be remarked that she did not now start at the thought, as in the first instance she had done.—"Yes; I *imagined*, indeed:—it was only a cold conceit;—my feelings now convince me it was. Poor Harry! many happy hours have we spent together; and had I not met this all-engrossing person—Poor Harry, poor Harry!—I fear you will be a sufferer. And must not I suffer too at the thought of having allowed you to suppose you had touched my heart, when you but interested my friendly feelings? My only consolation will be, that I never directly deceived you; that, by words at least, I never gave you a right to believe your own strong preference returned. And yet, here is but a poor extenuation, after all;—for, shall I disguise from myself, that my general manner and general conversation, the tone of the voice, the glance of the eye, often conveyed such assurances as you could not mistake, and such as, working upon your generous nature, may henceforth poison the happiness of your life?—Poor Harry Talbot!"

And after dwelling upon this picture, the eye which Eliza again caught in her primitive mirror, was dimmed with a tear.

"I will write directly to my early and best friend, Belinda," continued Eliza; "and as she was aware, from the outset, of my childish prepossession for Harry—indeed, as she approved and

encouraged it—her usually superior mind may give me some direction. I wish she would now keep her old promise of coming to see me: yet, no, no! much as we esteem each other, I dread, until I receive her answer at least, to encounter, personally, Belinda's strong and overpowering suggestions, whatever they may prove to be."

And Eliza continued to ruminate, surrounded by sunshine, and the songs and airy curvettings of the little birds, indifferent, for the first day of her life, to the joy-giving presence of both.

Another person of her own sex had for some time sat unobserved at a little distance, not so insensible, though little of youth's smiling sympathy was in her heart, to the cheering sun-beam. This person relished the genial glow in something of the taste of the domestic cat, when, purring excessively, with half-shut eyes, puss elevates her furry coat to admit the warmth of the winter fire.

As Eliza Hartley looked along the chequered verdure of the river path, she perceived that one stream of light was wanted, in a certain well-known spot, and, advancing, she found that its usual passage was obstructed by the low burly person of Nanny the Knitter, who, sitting full in its way, monopolized to her round back the benefits of the ray that Nature had destined to a more general ministry, as, now stirring one shoulder, now another, her sensations acknowledged its pleasing influence.

She was intent upon the employment which bestowed her appellation of "The Knitter." In a pocket, especially constructed to hold it, was deposited her ball of worsted, that turned round and round therein, as the thread extending from it to her fingers became wrought, with almost magical art and celerity, into comfortable coverings for rustic feet and legs, of different conditions. Her fingers moved and twisted, and came in contact with each other, so flippantly as to baffle the eye in its endeavour to trace regular motion, during a ceaseless operation that was, nevertheless, invariably regular. And, sitting or standing, or stumping along, for she was often afoot, this was Nanny's constant occupation.

To carry on her staple manufacture, she engaged in a considerable and varied traffic. Needles, threads, tape, and thimbles, and a variety of other little et ceteras, she bartered with the rustic dames around for small portions of fleece;—nay, she travelled, at stated times, into the adjacent mountain district of Wicklow, to procure the finer wool of the small sheep; and all this she carded and spun with her own hands, and transformed into stockings, for which she found a ready market, "both," to use her own words, "among the common sort and the quality, all the same." And Nanny's stockings were, indeed, of surprising texture.

But although such was the employment from which she derived her surname and her regular means of existence, it was not the

only agency by which Nanny filled "the weazel-skin purse with the yellow guineas;" for there *was* such a purse, the neighbours whispered, "the length of her knitting-needle, to receive her savings for her, and not to make them the worse of putting up:" and under the head of "savings" may be comprised nearly all the money she in any way obtained; for eating and drinking cost her nothing; Nanny being always as a guest, from one farmer's house to another, or in the kitchens of more considerable persons. And upon the authority of a shopkeeper in the next town, the neighbours added that Nanny was in the habit of changing her copper into the smallest piece of silver; that into a larger one; and still, with the addition of more copper, or else by the junction of two minor pieces, from shillings she would create half-crowns, then crowns, and finally—the wonder and envy of her friends—guineas, themselves; and thus, although little acquainted with the sciences, Nanny discovered the Philosopher's stone, by the only process—although so different from the old theory—through which it will ever be attained.

An account of the collateral occupation, by virtue of which as well as by virtue of her knitting kneedles, those rapid changes went on, must not be omitted. At one and the same time, and at all times, with her handicraft business—for, wherever she was, and however employed in talking, her hands were never idle—Nanny followed the profession of a Mercury in love affairs. Not, indeed, with the despatch of the celestial messenger, because she often contrived to prolong final terminations, in order still to hold the parties under contribution; yet, if she was slower than upon similar occasions was the match-maker of the gods of old, never, like him, did she undertake an illicit affair! Her embassies invariably had in view the uniting, in the bonds of wedlock, the youthful (sometimes the more reverend) folk around her.

And various were her commissions to this end. Fathers and mothers engaged her to inspect keenly the worldly substance of "the boy" or the girl they had in their eye for daughter or for son; and if matters appeared fit and proper, she would throw out hints sufficient to open a negociation. Shame-faced lads employed her to sound the feelings of the lasses they sighed for;—a task they might not themselves have ability to undertake; and still oftener, bashful or clever maidens, as the case might be, fed her to attempt similar discoveries. If a mother had a daughter whom it was advisable, no matter for what reason, to establish in the world, Nanny was consulted; and she was always ready to display an assortment of young men, as strictly in a mercantile point of view, as the merchant when he exhibits his bales of goods: nor was her stock of young women ever found less deficient or diversified. From her strictly proper views of things, mere love-matches, disproportioned in a worldly sense, as is almost uniformly the case, met no

assistance from Nanny. She would indeed go so far towards the legitimate verge of her vocation, as to help a marriage, when competence, love, and a good disposition, sought alliance with superior wealth; but, out of regard to her character, she was never known to be a party to any very unequal unions.

In the way of business, she had taken certain steps, relative to the establishment of our heroine as the lady of Harry Talbot; and, in this instance, Harry's seeming amiability and liberal fees may be said to have engaged Nanny in one of the extreme cases of her professional practice.

Upon the present evening, however, as she sat in the sun at her work, the match-maker's mind was embarrassed on this particular subject. It could not, even for a few hours, have escaped her eyes, or her ears at least, that the heiress of Hartley Court was likely to be addressed by a new suitor: and hence many serious questions arose. Would the new suitor be more acceptable than the old?—Would he be more worthy of acceptance, in point of worldly fortune?—Would he employ her as often, and pay her as generously? Nanny could not venture to say; for as yet she had never seen Sir William Judkin.

"The bright evenin' to you, Miss Eliza, my honey! and the blessins o' life an' health be in your path!" she said, with one of her customary duckings downward, having arisen as the young lady appeared.

"Good evening, Nanny; and how is Shaun-a-Gow's daughter?" smiling at a recollection of the surveillance Nanny kept up over all the young females in the neighbourhood.

"May I never do an ill turn, Miss Eliza, my honey! but she's a comely, clane crature; an' good wid all that; an' sprightly as a kittin, considherin' a counthry girl, like her. An' to tell nothin' bud the thruth, there was one spakin' to me about Kitty Gow. But," in a whisper, "I don't b'lieve it 'ill be. The father is a fraptious, cross-grained man; an', faix! I'm a'most afeard to meddle. I make a guess he won't let her have the body that wants her, thinkin' him not good enough; but good enough he is for Shaun-a-Gow's daughter, tho' only a sarvent boy."

"I wish well to pretty Kitty Gow, Nanny, and hope she may be happy in time, with her father's consent—if, indeed, her admirer is a young person of respectable conduct."

"Faix, my pet! you're a good judge o' that your ownself; you know him well: it's one Tim Reily, his honour your father's man."

"Indeed! I did not suppose Timothy inclined or even fitted for the shackled state."

"Och! never mind Tim, Miss Eliza; he has the humorsome, pleasant way wid him, to be sure; but he's no great fool, into the bargain!"

"Well, well," said Eliza, beginning to think seriously about

Kitty Gow and Tim Reily, and then about herself and two other persons.

There was a pause in the dialogue. The Knitter bent forward, a little, her short, thick person, and protruded her round face a degree or two from beneath the hood of her blue cloak, which, according to her invariable mode of costume, was drawn over her head, and surmounted by a masculine, foxy-coloured hat; and, in this position did she peer at the young lady, with her whitish eyes glimmering out of beds of flesh, formed partly by bare protuberances where there should have been eyebrows, partly by the heights of her plump cheeks. Eliza Hartley, once more immersed in her own affairs, seemed to have forgotten Nanny's presence, and so afforded, to her attentive observer, a good opportunity for study. From the inclination of her mouth to smile, and the half motion of the dimples of her cheeks, it might first be supposed that her thoughts were not of a disagreeable nature; but her features afterwards assumed a sombre cast, and an expression of pity formed a watery film in her eyes, and wetted the long silken lashes, that gently bent towards the blooming cheek to discharge the moisture.

Nanny saw the thoughts passing from the ingenuous mind to the countenance she contemplated; and she deemed it a good time to speak.

"An' the ould sweetheart, poor Misther Talbot, as we hear, may go wid his courtin' to some other lady?" she remarked, in a whisper.

Eliza Hartley started, and to her fingers' ends she blushed scarlet deep.

"Nanny," she said, "you must never talk so to me."

"Poor young gentleman, the heart widin his body will be broke."

"Foolish old woman, have I not forbid your freedom?" An accusing conscience soured her temper, and, with a brow of displeasure, Eliza Hartley turned towards her home.

Nanny saw that she was nearly out of favour. The young lady paced slowly and with dignity, and she stumped after her.

"But the heart's liking must have its way; an' quare would it be to say that Miss Eliza, the pet, that's great, an' rich, an' as comely as the May-day, shouldn't have her own pick-an'-choose, be him lord, or be him arl, or be him juke, or the King of England on his throne, if it came to that!"

Still no answer. The offended fair one had gained a door leading through an orchard to her father's house.

"Miss Eliza, my honey dear, don't be vexed entirely wid your poor ould Nanny."

Eliza turned round, and her face beamed on the apprehensive old woman the full force of its usual good-nature and condescension.

"Where are you going, Nanny?"

"I'm goin', my honey! to look afther Shaun-a-Gow's daughther, Kitty."

"Well, then, good evening, Nanny; and when you have attended to your business, come up to the Court, and the housekeeper shall have orders to provide you with your supper and a bed."

"Och, may the blessins purshue you and be in your road, Miss Eliza, my honey!"

Miss Eliza smilingly bowed her head, and Nanny also performed her adieu,—not with any of that graceful inclination of person her young patroness would have used: much more simply, however; that is, by suddenly bending her knees until her short petticoats touched the ground, and then as suddenly rising and ducking again, while the lady remained in view, and accompanying every curtsey, such as it was, with verbose ejaculations and prayers for her long life, health, happiness, and prosperity.

When they at length lost sight of each other, Nanny put on one of her gravest, most important, and most business-like faces, as she shook her head and reflected that a considerable source of occupation and profit seemed dried up; for she had succeeded in persuading Mr. Harry Talbot, that she was all-powerful with Sir Thomas Hartley's beautiful heiress.

There had been a listener to the conversation between her and Eliza Hartley, as he was also a keen observer of their parting, or rather of the little quarrel that had preceded it. Conveniently for the purposes of an eaves-dropper, a grove of beautiful and varied foliage, enclosed by a hedge, rose immediately behind the large ash-tree, under which we at first seated our heroine, for such in reality she is to be; and close to the hedge, completely out of view, this young gentleman lay in ambush. His post was originally assumed that he might, at full leisure, observe the fair and gentle deity of the scene, mellowed as her beauty was into a bewitching softness, by the cast of her thoughts as she looked on the river. When Eliza joined Nanny, he was induced to prolong his concealment, in the hope that their discourse would turn upon himself: what he thought of Nanny's peculating sympathy for a former and older lover, she and the reader will soon know.

The Knitter heard a bounding, elastic step behind her; and before she could turn her head, a sonorous, and not unmusical voice, accosted her.

"Whither in such haste, my good dame?"

She turned, and at the first glance her sage eye comprehended her man; and farther informed her, that Harry Talbot's case was a desperate one. The person she scrutinized seemed to her perhaps the very finest young man she had ever beheld; and Nanny prided herself upon being a judge in such matters, and a judge whose decision no one need question. He was tall; formed in the haughty kind of beauty of the Belvidere Apollo; (Nanny did not

make the comparison, but her homely ideas may bear this classic translation) his face a fine oval, with as much red and white as became a man; his eyes were large, lustrous black; his clustering hair, as glossy as the raven's wing, was, according to the fashion of the time, worn long; and his carriage, and the expression of his features, had the bold, dashing character which the fair reader will allow to be generally regarded by that sex whose opinion must give the law, with a favourable, and sometimes a deferential eye.

"Whither in such haste, my good dame?"

One moment's reflection was sufficient to inspire Nanny with the idea of how it behoved her to act under the circumstances. "Only jest a little way, your honour my honey!" she answered.

"That's a most lovely young lady you parted from just now!"

"Faix, an' it's no lie you're tellin', my honey; an' there's a pair o' ye wid the same fault."

"She seems very partial to you, old Nanny; is not that your name?"

"Nanny the soggarth put upon me, your honour my pet, an' Nanny the neighbours calls me out o' friendship, an' by the way of being free wid me; an' faix, yes, Miss Eliza, the graw, is as free wid me too—the blessins pour down on her purty head!—as free as she'd be wid one o' the quality, afther a manner."

"Well, harkye, my old dame, you will be my friend with your charming young patroness; and, for a reason why, hold out your hand—there is a guinea to get you tobacco, or whiskey, or knitting-needles, or whatever you like; and more of the same kind of fruit grows on the same tree, you know!"

"The blessins—"

"Nonsense—keep your tongue quiet, and listen to me. Never, as long as you breathe or knit, mention to her again that young person—that Harry—what d' you call him—?"

"Square Harry Talbot, your honour, my honey!"

"Ay, the same:—if I find you ever do, by all that's charming—meaning her,—and by all that's ugly—including yourself,—your round head shall be wrung off, and put in your pocket for a worsted-ball, to spin your stockings out of."

"Why, then, may I never do an ill turn, but Nanny washes her hands of him from this blessed moment out! Would there be any harum in axin you, my pet, if your car was cocked near the river's side a little while agone?"

"Certainly I was there, long before you came up, or how could I know what passed between you?"

"Why then, mind my words, my graw,—that I may'tent die in sin but you'll win the prize, as sure as I have my weddin'-stockins on me."

"Win!—To be sure I shall. Let me see who dares cross me:—win!"

As he spoke, a confidence, perhaps the result as much of former success in less important affairs of the heart, as of his high opinion of his personal qualifications, mingled with the haughty, yet manly, expression of his tone and features.

"Why, then," her whitish eyes twinkling at the raptures of her new acquaintance, as would those of a tradesman viewing a rich sample of his goods,—"why, then, a merry asther to me but it's you I like, your honour, my pet; you have the *spudduch** in you; an' if I was a fair lady to-morrow, it's such as you I'd have, that wouldn't be snakin', an' creepin', an' —"

"Well, I can't stop merely to prate with you. Good bye; mind our terms; be my friend, and expect some fellows to what you have got, and abundance of customers for your stockings, as soon as the beauty of the Slaney is mine: be my enemy, or even prove indifferent to my hopes and interests, and never wind worsted, or knit stockings more."

"As sure as I'm a lump of a sinner, your honour my honey, I'll do my endayvours, as pure out o' love an' likin', as for the sake o' the lucre."

But before she finished this speech of half mistatement and half truth, her new friend had bounded out of view, on his way to Hartley Court; and Nanny jogged on "to give a look after Shawn-a-Gow's daughter:"—her usual sturdy step, a certain swinging of her nether garments, and a corresponding motion in her shoulders, giving her the air of one who thought herself of some importance in the world.

CHAPTER III.

The river Slaney, in its course through the county of Wexford, sports amid regions of beauty. Nothing, indeed, of the bold, the magnificent, or the terrific, fills with awe and wonder the mind of a spectator; but Nature is there to be placidly contemplated in all her diversities of wood, of verdure, and of water: such as, we may well believe, tempted the old mail-clad Norman to desire the possession of a land of so much lovely promise.

On either side of the river, the grounds rise and fall in every change of soft form; domain succeeds domain, and mansion is in view of mansion: some in the little vallies, some crowning the

* Spirit.

little eminences; and sloping fields of the tenderest green, clustering woods, or scattered trees of beautiful growth, each casting its own single shadow across the silent meadow, present an ever-changing landscape, which meditative virtue would prefer to more tremendous scenes of nature.

Sometimes, the dark wood clothes the quick descent, and seems stooping to bathe its branches in the water; or the grassy hill rises quickly above the stream's edge, and the foliaged height is at a greater distance; or the less abrupt mound slopes to the level sward, which, soft and elastic, and studded with bush or tree, stretches to the limpid wave; or here and there discloses itself but in patches between the frequent groves; and the mysterious glen, with its dusky and shaded sides, conceals the course of some tributary rill.

The Slaney, we have said, appears to gambol through these beautiful varieties. Clear and rapid, it rushes round the protruding point, bounds against the opposing hill, or in devious meanders winds towards the occasional level. And if the ancient superstition were to give to its local deity the care and guidance of the erratic stream, he might be described as a youthful divinity of mixed gentleness and sportiveness of nature, now frolicking along the margin of his river, now gently reclining on her banks, and in every change of mood fascinated with his situation.

In this sketch, we particularly have in view the banks of the Slaney before its near approach to the sea, when it becomes more expanded, assumes a more sober and important character, and when its attendant fascinations are more stately and less frequent.

But such as has been described was the scenery around Hartley Court, the seat of our heroine's father. And amid all the mansions that looked down on the river, or contributed their lawns or groves to eke out the general landscape, that of Sir Thomas Hartley was peculiarly distinguished by a venerable character of age and solidity.

The house stood on the west bank of the Slaney; but in what particular spot, it is not, for sufficiently good reasons, convenient to point out. Its extensive front faced the public road from Enniscorthy to Newtownbarry, or more anciently, Bunclody; and at the rear the windows overlooked the clear river, of which the green banks sloped up no more than the distance of a few paces, to the boundary of the edifice. A lawn of the most elastic turf extended from the front to the road, guarded by a low wall, which at the spot exactly opposite the hall door, scarcely reached above the knee of the passenger, that so he might stop to admire the mansion, and from it be observed to pay his flattering tribute of supposed approbation; and a few old pear-trees, planted by the hands of yore, and still sheeted with white blossoms in the spring, and bending with mellow fruit in the autumn, two hawthorns of surpassing growth, that perfumed the air in May, and some half dozen of umbrageous

chestnuts and sycamores, gave a chequered shadow to the lawn's bright green.

From the right-hand side of the house, a row of ancient limes swept to the avenue gate; and at the left, a corresponding row sheltered the garden, separated from the lawn only by a hedge, against the northern blast. Still to the right, beyond the avenue, a grove ran to the Slaney, adown a sloping hill. The garden, at the opposite side, was entered by a little gate-way; over the garden appeared a hanging orchard, whence, by a private door, the river's edge might be gained; and here, two straight lines of beech formed, for a little distance, by the water, a shady walk; while, farther on, arose the plantation within which a listener has lately been concealed, and outside the bounding hedge-row of which, was the old ash-tree, that coiled up its roots to supply a seat to the beautiful object of his interest.

The house, it has been said, was unique of structure. At either end of its front, stood two square masses of building, perhaps once intended to represent flanking towers; but at present, instead of loop-holes, through which to annoy an approaching enemy, three stories of large windows were to be seen; and a grove of slender chimney-tops farther indicated that those towers, if they may so be termed, now served for other uses than that of warlike defence. The front that connected them was considerable, and also full of windows; and it terminated above in a flagged parapet, over which peeped the pointed, precipitate roof. The whole edifice was dashed; its colour of a sombre greyish hue; and the ivy, that rioted about the lower casements, told that Time had passed its walls.

Advancing about midway towards the house, you discovered in the lawn, elevated upon a massive pedestal, a surly-looking warrior, or, perhaps, heathen deity; and the windows of the edifice also allowed him to be contemplated by such of the inmates as were inclined to discuss the question of his identity, or might have had a relish for the Fine Arts. And, at length arrived at the mansion, another figure, more obviously a hero in Roman costume, regarded you, leaning upon his spear, from his niche over the hall-door; although it was difficult to decide upon the classic name he claimed at your hands, inasmuch as the proprietor of Hartley Court would not, himself, venture to determine the point.

We acknowledge an almost garrulous inclination to continue a picture of the old edifice:—who can say what peculiar recollections and association of our's may cling, like the twining ivy, to its venerable walls? And the reader may therefore accompany us past the entrance-door, low and heavy, and altogether out of proportion with the mansion, into the spacious black and white marble hall, where he will be faced by the broad, polished oak-stairs, inclosed by its ponderous and highly-carved balustrades, and where, at either hand, pannelled doors admitting to different apart-

ments or narrow passages, also shine in the dark splendour of old oak, and that oak old Irish.

Indeed, almost all the timber-work within view was of the old oak of the neighbourhood; extensive forests of which had, in times gone by, spread over the county of Wexford, and into the neighbouring county of Wicklow, where the wood of Shillela, perhaps the only remnant of these primeval plantations, yet stands to afford, (as, from something of national pride, we trust every body knows,) to the generous sons of green Ireland, native weapons of peculiar excellence in combat.

As the massive hall-door is closed after him—not lightly banged to, with the velocity of the smart step of a porter of our day, or even of the day then in being, but requiring some time and effort to be toilsomely moved round on its hinges—the reader may proceed with us up the unyielding staircase, leaning his hand, if he is tired with his ramble abroad, upon the carved balustrade; having gained the venerably shadowed landing place, we propose, without waiting the formality of an announcement, to usher him through a door to his right, which he will perceive to be also surrounded with rich carving; and provided he promise to give no disturbance, nor to make his presence irksome by any unreasonable interference, we will place him in a comfortable arm-chair, at one side, where he can look on and decorously attend to what passes.

The apartment was elegantly furnished in the modern style—that is, the modern style of about thirty years ago. In a window recess, so deep as almost to hide her from our view, but that the slanting evening beam shot in to illumine her person, sat our heroine, Eliza Hartley. Her walking-dress, in which she last appeared before us, was doffed, and she held a book in her hand; but that hand lay listlessly upon her knee; and the book was closed, except that one finger remained between the leaves, while its rose-tipped and taper companions spread over its cover. Her head leaned towards her left shoulder; her blooming cheek was indented by the forefinger of her disengaged hand; the next to that or middle finger, pressed up her under-lip into a beautiful, discontented pout, and the others bent gracefully towards the silky palm: thus presenting that pretty contact between cheek and hand, which inspired the love-lorn Romeo with his celebrated wish.

Her eyes were cast down, and seemed to be intently contemplating her partly up-turned little foot. Through her whole position there was a play of the curving line, so much esteemed by artists, perfected and rendered fascinating to any observer, no matter how little of a connoisseur, provided we suppose him young, by embracing, in its progress through the figure, those tender undulations that characterize maiden beauty. The golden sun lighted up, into such a glow as might become a cherubim near the Throne, her always blooming cheek; and, shining through her wavy hair,

produced that vivid effect of transparent colour which we see in shrubs, trees, and flowers, when, at morning or evening, he shines through them to us. A little to one side, towards a window farther from the door than that occupied by Eliza Hartley, sat another female.

She was employed in (we believe) embroidery, or light fancy needle-work of some kind. She wore a well-stiffened cap, formidably high in front. Tiny as were the waists of ladies, even at a late period, (not with our good will, inasmuch as they gave us the idea of an extreme liability to snap across in that part of the lovely female shape,) the second person to be noticed, had a waist of even less circumference, and of a length that made one almost suppose she had been spun out to increase her height. Below this stretch of waist, the lady increased so suddenly, and to so curious an extent, that, if the half of her figure above conveyed a notion of lankness, this gave a contrary and incongruous expression of fulness. And such an abrupt variety in the construction of two adjacent portions of the same person, caused us for some time to wonder at the whims of Nature, until, having consulted a lady-relative of the last century, we learned that art had most to do with the previously unaccountable disagreement—that, in fact, the cylinder waist had been formed by the powerful pressure of whalebone, and that semicircular pieces of the same material, (the idea taken, no doubt, from Cupid's bow,) fastened under the drapery, gave the second monstrous appearance. This great breadth of drapery continued to the floor; and from beneath a stiff and rustling tabinet appeared just the very tips of two feet, or rather the sharp points of two embroidered silk shoes, propped at the heels upon three inches of wood, all in the style of forty years before.

"Dear niece," said this lady, after a long silence had ensued between her and Eliza, "the tender preference is, believe me, mutual. I could not be deceived in the nature of Sir William's attentions; for, though many, many years have elapsed since my ever-to-be-remembered loss, still I do not forget that exactly as your amiable admirer looks and acts in your presence, so, in mine, did the dear unhappy youth, now no more."

"Absurd, my dear aunt, with your pardon," interrupted Eliza, getting tired of allusions she had heard from infancy, rather than of the former allusions which they would illustrate, although her words spoke her difficulty—"absurd, my dear aunt, to attribute such sentiments either to me or to Sir William."

"Well, well, child, I but sought, I am sure, to alleviate the soft doubts and fears of your bosom, which escape every moment in those long-drawn sighs."

"*I* sigh, aunt!—nay, you only listen to the echoes of your own customary respirations:" for, after every recurrence to the unfortunate termination of her early love, Miss Alicia Hartley was, in-

deed, in the habit of uttering what she believed to be a very rueful inhaling and exhaling of the breath.

"Is that so very, very true, my love?" whispered Eliza's father at her ear. He had softly entered the room, and stood behind her chair unobserved by our heroine, during her meditative mood; and he remained secured from Miss Alicia's notice also, by the deep recess of the window.

"What, Sir? is what true? and tell me the difference, pray, between true, very true, and very, very true." Her serious mood now suddenly passed away, or Eliza easily succeeded in shaking it off, and she turned up her head to address her father in that sportive manner that was usual with her.

"Eliza, I would speak seriously to you."

"Seriously, papa?" her small voice tinkling with the effect of a merry note of music; while she assumed a childish face of mock gravity, and looked full into her father's eyes, whose pleased and fond smile readily responded to her graceful fooling.

"Fie, now Sir; seriously, you know,—and yet, see how you begin!"

"Dear child, I believe you could make me smile in——

"In the next fit of the gout, Sir?"

"No—I do not say as much"—recollecting, indeed, that Eliza's spells used, hitherto, to have but little effect, on such occasions—"no; but in more serious misfortune."

"Could I, dear papa?"—and she sprang forward, and threw her soft arms round his neck,—"and nothing can ever make your Eliza so happy as to hear you say so!"

"Nothing, my child?"

"No, indeed, Sir."

"Have a care, Eliza. I know you now speak of quiet, easy happiness, that soothes, without agitating, a young heart."

"Oh, indeed, indeed, I do"—and she softly pressed his hand to her bosom.

"But is there no happiness above this, or differing from it, of which you form a notion, or have a wish for—a happiness that sets the heart vibrating to the sound of a voice, or glowing to a look—that sends little pleasing flutters through every fibre, and sometimes breathes out little airy hopes, that know not well what they hope?—tell me truly, Eliza, have you no notion of any happiness like this?"

"Let me see, Sir. It is a difficult question—to say little of its being a long one—and requires a close and cautious analysis. I must have time to take it asunder; examine each part separately; then put it together again, study the odd compound as a whole, and finally make up my mind for an answer."

"I will simplify the case: Do you love, Eliza?"

"Yes, to be sure, a great many things; but what, papa?"

"Suppose—Harry Talbot!"
"Very much, indeed."
"Do you love another better?"
"Oh, a great deal."
"Who?"
"I love yourself, my dearest papa, a thousand times better."
"I thought so."
"And are you angry at it, Sir?"
"Come, Eliza—to be, as I said, serious"—
"Yes, Sir;—to be serious."
"Not with that silly face, child."
"Nay—now, papa is vexed, in earnest."
"No, Miss Hartley; but he may be."
"But he shan't"—her eyes laughing into his; "and what would he do to her, if Eliza really—really vexed him?"

"I do not know: the occasion would suggest its proportionate severity: but I am not practised in this subject, dear child; hitherto, you have not given me opportunity to be so."

"And that is all because her own dear papa is too good, too indulgent to his saucy daughter."

From this specimen of question and answer, may be gathered an idea of our heroine's tolerable skill in playing with a topic which she did not wish to meet; and it may farther indicate how, upon, as Sir William Judkin thought, many propitious occasions, she was able to foil her lover's attempts to ascertain, by her manner of replying to his declaration, the favourable opinion in his regard, which indeed, for the last two months, needed the expression of words only.

"I fear you are right, Eliza," resumed Sir Thomas, replying to her last little speech; "but for the next few minutes at least, I am determined to play the tyrant with you: here you stand, secured, at my side, and hence you shall not stir until I receive a rational answer to the question I have asked. Nor is it put idly, nor for the purpose of learning a secret. Consider, my child, that I have a father's feelings and fears upon this subject. You have been to me a very precious treasure; the light and pride of my house, and, God knows, the only consolation of an early widowed heart."

"Papa," said Eliza, while her father's glistening eyes made her's stream profusely, "I will now answer your question seriously—but, Sir, not before your face." Smiles again sparkling through her tears, as, with both hands pressed against his temples, she gently turned away his head. "I do, Sir,"—blushes clothed her face, neck, and forehead, and her voice sank into a whisper—"I do love."

Sir Thomas was silent for a moment; and the air of solemn concern which took possession of his brow did not escape the side-

long look of Eliza. After a painful pause, he drew a sigh, and spoke on.

"I thank my treasure for her candour. But, in equal candour, it is my duty to say, that I regret the avowal. Long ago I hoped your heart had been given to another; and that other, Eliza, commanded my good opinion. I had attentively observed him, while he grew from boy into man; and I believed him capable of making my only child as happy as she deserves to be."

"Dearest papa—" sobbed Eliza, once more falling on his neck, "I should not—indeed, I should not—have formed this preference without your approval; but you were away in Dublin at first, Sir,—and—but no matter; I have no right to argue with my beloved father, and I will try—let the trial cost me what it may—I will now try to train my silly heart to your wishes."

"No, my good and gentle child. God forbid I should, in its first youth, cause to ache that bosom which never gave mine a throb but one of pleasure. I am no tyrannical father. At my years, the nature of the human breast, while it is not a mystery, should be a warning against despotic measures. Let me proceed:—I now am anxious to say, that I can name no serious or particular objection to the young gentleman towards whom you entertain such favourable feelings. I should only wish to know him a little better, before I formally recognize him as my son. I had fixed my mind upon the other person alluded to, perhaps because I thought your own inclined that way: it was a mistake of course—"

"Oh, Sir!" interrupted Eliza, her conscience and high-mindedness prompting her to avow that it had not been quite a mistake; but her emotions really deprived her of the power of farther utterance.

"Do not distress yourself, my child; do not try to speak; we will, for the present, end this. You will have my blessing on your love, Eliza; and I feel confident that no man can so far forget his more human feelings, as ever to give you pain, or do your peace an injury. There, my child,—this moment, I ask God to bless your young choice—I ask the boon in a father's fondest anxiety—may it be granted!"

After rising with her, supporting her on one arm, and religiously looking upward, he slowly kissed her fair forehead, tenderly placed her in the chair he had just left, and walked out of the room,—his eyes streaming tears, such as

——— "Pious fathers shed
Upon a duteous daughter's head."

For some time, Eliza remained motionless in the seat in which her father had placed her; many delicious feelings, and a few disagreeable ones, keeping her cheeks moistened.

Could there be, indeed, any thing hidden from her partial eye,

in Sir William's character, which her father had observed, or heard of? She bent her mind to scrutinize him, from recollection, very closely, and, as she resolved, without a shade of prejudice. His person was faultless; that point seemed easily disposed of. His birth, his education, were unexceptionable; these points too. His manners were polished—brilliant—no common observer could deny the fact: a little gay, indeed, like her own; and if he was objected to on such an account, so must she be. His tastes, his feelings, his opinions, his every mode of thinking, also coincided with her's; and again, if, upon any of these heads, Sir William's character had been deemed defective, her's was equally so.

Upon what, then, in the name of consistency, was founded her father's dislike? But her father had merely preferred another person, because with that other he had been better acquainted; he had not even found fault; away, then, with every doubt of her lover!

She had been wise, however, in hitherto avoiding to afford Sir William an opportunity for a declaration. And she would still avoid to do so;—so much was due to her father. But Eliza contemplated no new transfer of her affections: that was impossible! It was very unfortunate her dear father did not warmly approve. He had said as much as that he wished time to observe her lover: well; she would allow him full time; and if her discernment of personal merit was not very much at fault indeed, Sir William would bear the scrutiny, and rise triumphantly from it.

And thus, without much cause for grieving, after all, Eliza's path seemed smooth before her. Yet her heart *would* be sad. What was it o'clock?—Surely, *his* hour—and hark!—The massive knocker of the hall-door pealed, indeed, Sir William's well-known challenge for admission.

In a few seconds afterwards, the Baronet advanced into the room with a free and graceful carriage, different as was also the expression of his glance and the tone of his voice, while he murmured his evening salutations to both ladies—from a certain dryness, hardness, and even swagger of manner, put on perhaps for his purposes at the moment, which marked his late interview with Nanny the Knitter. An air of laughing boldness now played through his fine figure, around his handsome mouth, sparkled in his eye, and was emblazoned by the rich, healthy, but not effeminate bloom of his countenance. The expression we would try to convey is indicated, if not fully given, by the French term *enjoué*, applied to such a mixture of pleasant-seeming youthfulness and manly dash as pervaded the person and features of Sir William. Among the people from whom the word is borrowed, it is a frequent characteristic; and, after them, is perhaps oftener and more similarly exhibited by the Irish gentleman, than by individuals of any other country with which we are acquainted.

But natural conformation of character is here meant, rather than

its ingenious assumption: the one being as amiable as it is prepossessing; while the other, even where it is so aptly affected as not to prove disagreeable, often seems the result of daring habits of libertinism. In the world, however, little distinction is made between the two: even to severe eyes they will occasionally be confounded with each other; and we do not arrogate a sufficient degree of discrimination, to be able to say whether or not Sir William Judkin inherited the natural grace, or judiciously displayed the assumed accomplishment. To our casual observation, his *enjoué* air and manner appeared to sit easily upon him; Eliza Hartley is of the same opinion; and no farther does it seem necessary to put the question.

Miss Alice rose up to receive him; all the placid good-nature of her inward character beaming from her face, and blending with her old-fashioned dignity of mien; in truth, her return of the young Baronet's salute seemed equally compounded of kindness and stiffness, elegance and absurdity.

The meeting between him and his mistress was not so formal; though, indeed, his reverential bow might be taken as one of devotion, rather than of mere earthly admiration, towards the divinity of the sanctuary window-recess. But Eliza did not answer it farther than by a slight bend of the neck, and a sweet though tempered smile; proclaiming at once her consciousness and pride of power, her sense of sufficient condescension conferred, and to us, who have overheard her late discourse with her father, her refreshed resolve to hold her slave, for some time longer, at a certain distance.

And owing to the motive for the last-mentioned expression of manner, Sir William, though he had this evening approached Hartley Court with most manful resolutions to possess himself of a certain acknowledgment, yet, when the hour came for offering his good-night, he found not only that he had failed in carrying his determinations into effect, but that, in consequence of too bold an attempt to do so, he stood a few steps farther from success than he had stood upon entering the drawing-room. And while thus left an object of some doubt to our readers, we deem it a proper time to supply a farther account of the young and handsome wooer.

He was the sister's son of a lately deceased old Baronet, whose estate he arrived to inherit, and which joined that of Sir Thomas Hartley. His mother had made a love match with a young English officer, whom she met at a race-ball, or some such place of village adventures, and had become rejected in consequence by her high, aristocratic family. She was entitled, however, by her mother's marriage settlement, to a considerable portion; and with this to aid the slender income of his pay—his only annuity—she cheerfully followed the fortunes of the husband of her choice.

He embarked with his regiment for the American war, and was

killed at the celebrated battle of Bunker's Hill: leaving to his young widow a son and daughter, as an only legacy. She was, however, a thrifty lady; and, returning to her native country, settled in the metropolis, where, upon the income of her dowry, about three hundred pounds per annum, she diligently set about the education of her children. The girl died in infancy, and her entire care and affection became centred in her son.

Her mother was not alive at the time of her marriage, and, shortly after, her father also died. She had then remaining to her, of family connexions in Ireland, but a brother and a sister: the former inheriting his father's title and estate, and, along with both, his father's high-blooded antipathy to his imprudent sister: the latter, an amiable young lady of twenty-five, not regarding her sister's early error in a light so heinous as to cause her to forget all sisterly solicitude and endearments, or quite to forswear all sisterly affection.

Since the battle of the Boyne, when the first Baronet, notwithstanding the princely notions of the family, gained his title and broad lands, all the Pierts had been eminent fox-hunters: some of them hearty ones; some of them morose; and of the latter class was the abhorring brother of this lady. As selfish as riotous in his enjoyments, and careless about the elegancies or the comforts of home, he married to increase his means for half-savage gratifications, and then treated his wife with less consideration than his horses: so that his unsinning sister, finding his huge, noisy, waste house unfitted to her ideas of living like a lady, and altogether unpleasant to reside in, quitted it and settled with the mother of the present Sir William Judkin—and this step, while it augmented his aversion to the latter, brought the fugitive also under his bann; and his humour became irremovably confirmed towards the living interests of the one, and the memory of the other, when Miss Piert dying, bequeathed her portion, equal to that of her elder sister, away from him, and to the detested widow, just at the very time when he began to stand in need of some such windfall from the tree of fortune.

No children followed his alliance with his ill-fated lady; and thus deprived of the mother's interest to console her for the husband's continued brutality, she demanded a separation. It was granted in a fit of high passion; and she retired amongst her own friends, to live more quietly on her own well-secured settlement.

Now he kept a kind of Bachelors' Hall, and drank and hunted quite independently; until one fine sporting day, as trying to clear a treacherous fence, he came in sight of a death, his hitherto faultless horse "toed" and fell under him, and the hunter's triumphant shout of jollity proved, indeed, a death-halloo for another besides the hopeless Reynard; who, it is said, burning in agonies, grinned ghastly pleasure at the sudden fate of the greatest enemy his race

had ever known: a thing not absolutely impossible, taking into account that he was a middle-aged and thrice-hunted fox, and farther remembering the many wonderful stories of cunning sagacity which, since our earliest childhood, have illustrated to us the fox's attributes.

Although reckoning, perhaps, on some such leap out of the world as we have just seen him take, the old Baronet was never known to express much abhorrence of the unavoidable succession of his nephew, William Judkin. But he might have thought words superfluous on the subject, when he had inwardly resolved, that, provided he happened to hunt long enough for the purpose, there should be little for him to succeed to. And indeed, though thus suddenly curbed in the ultimate realization of his plan, he had so far arranged, as to leave to his young heir an estate much encumbered. And this leads us to debate or surmise a few questions.

After finding himself only a few days in possession of not much more than a nominal income of fortune, might not Sir William, young and ardent as he was, have acknowledged to himself, how opportunely the unincumbered estate of the heiress of Hartley Court, together with a good sum of ready money, and a better one in expectancy from the sentimental Miss Alice, would serve to bring out of bondage many an acre that his uncle had placed therein? And if, upon the night following his unsuccessful visit, the fair sighing young lady thought for hours; and, when she was tired of thinking it, only closed her eyes to dream, until the beams of the morning sun startled her from her visions, of pure, unalloyed, and disinterested love,—did the gallant Sir William, as he also consulted his pillow, feel the arrow less deep within his breast, because it was barbed with gold?

Let Time, the truth-teller, answer our conjecture.

CHAPTER IV.

In the gay month of June our story opened. The reader will now please to suppose, that three moons have successively shone out and become dark again; that the trees have assumed the varied autumnal livery which painters so much admire; and the harvest been gathered home from the fields, and piled in large, well constructed stacks in the "haggart." The last fruits of the year too, somewhat roughly shaken by the more gusty blast, strew the orchard overnight, and remind the owner that it is time to think of

stripping his trees of their remaining burden. The birds wholly give up the tutelage of their young: and parents and children, assuming their gregarious instinct, mix on terms of equality. The sun does not shine with summer's heat; yet his beam is cheering, and less oppressive. And if the reader be of similar taste with Eliza and her lover, he will find this a very delightful season for gentle exercise a-foot. Nature has put on such a happy variety of verdure, and the fresh breeze blows so pleasantly against the forehead, making every little exertion an act of enjoyment, and tempting forth from the shady covert of the darkened walk, to excursions more at large and more independent. In the estimation of our young friends, indeed, old Time seems to forget his hour-glass, and notes not the dribbling of its sand; and his ever-moving wings, that sometimes flap with tempest-noise, or bear him on with lightning speed, only glide by them in silken motion, almost unheard and unnoticed, while he ministers to love and youth and beauty.

In truth, the summer went, and the autumn came, unheeded; and during the happy interval, many interesting rambles, and much covert play of mutual attachment, might be detailed and portrayed for the reader, did not a reasonable caution preside over our pen. If, by our descriptions, we fully succeeded in presenting to some sighing fair or pensive youth, the most convincing pictures of her or his early experience; we, at the same time, might fatigue our more sober friend; who, now that he can no longer relish Love's bright illusions and "young dream," thinks all such occupations but as so much waste of the precious time, and of a valuable existence. The matter shall then be compromised between both: the more gentle reader, or the true lover of the other sex, may recollect all the little symptoms, and the many slight, but, to the interested eye, confirming proofs, by which either was able, previous to actual declaration, to ascertain the state of the heart, sought to be subjected to despotic rule; and thus, while an opportunity occurs for a pleasing retrospect of the happiest period of existence, a true though general sketch of the proceedings of Eliza and her admirer, cannot fail to be brought before the mind of him or her. As to our cynical patron, he need not trouble himself with any such cogitation; and therefore, as concerns him, we disclaim all intention of lightly occupying this paper.

In the foregoing instance, something like an admission seems to be made that, with three months passed over their heads, Eliza Hartley and Sir William Judkin are still only observing each other—that, in fact, they have not arrived at an explicit understanding. True; and it is farther admitted that the fault still is Eliza's. With an adroitness, not marked by the straight-forward sincerity which authors prefer in their heroines, she yet chooses to defeat her lover in his attempts at a declaration. Her father has long ago assured her that his doubts are cleared up—such is her

choice, and yet which we are not quite prepared to state. Perhaps having, with her aunt's assistance, ascertained the greatness of her power—a discovery within her capacity to make, were her aunt out of the question—she was not precipitate in exhibiting her own feelings: or, perhaps, mixed with her deference to Miss Alice's notions of decorum in affairs of the heart, she wished to insure the durability of her lover's chains, by daily adding to them a new link: or, less to her credit, Eliza might have tyrannically taken pleasure in witnessing the vassalage to which she had reduced one who was a slave worthy of her bondage.

Did there sometimes flit over the sunshine of her mind, the shade of a doubt—light as the thin-spun scrap of vapour, that, now and then, will pass across the most cloudless summer-sky? In the midst of all her love, admiration, and confidence, was there, or did Eliza half fancy there was, some little point of her lover's character not yet perfectly understood by her?

Had the recollection of Harry Talbot any thing to do with her seemingly playful hesitation? In the privacy of her chamber, after a morning, day, and night of undimmed happiness and vivacity, a thought of him would certainly awaken grief and remorse; and, in spite of her, terror, still.

Eliza's opinion of herself did not allow her to suppose that she had over-rated the strength and intensity of the attachment of her former lover. Such an attachment, so long and so deeply rooted, he would not easily abandon; and when called on to do so, Eliza feared she knew not what of dreadful consequence. For, although placid as the dove in her presence, Harry, she could learn, had once or twice, under peculiar causes of irritation, displayed a determination and sternness of character that she shuddered at the thought of seeing again called forth. Did she, then, vaguely temporize when pressed by visitations of this fear?—or, would she at least postpone the avowal of estranged affection which Sir William's declaration, if permitted, must produce, until Harry's reappearance at Hartley Court, when, admitting the state of her feelings, she might soothe him by truly asserting that his rival was not yet triumphant.

Her friend, Belinda, had not answered her letter descriptive of her first meeting with Sir William; and, in the apprehension that her young school-companion was hostile to her rapid transfer of affection, might not even this circumstance assist to make her pause and coquette, as it is admitted she did?

Belinda St. John, even when a girl, at school with Eliza, had been remarkable for a pensive and somewhat moody character. Silent and thoughtful, she displayed little of the vivacity that sent her class-mate skipping about the room when task-hour was over, or the visit of the dancing-master at hand. But deep enthusiasm of feeling lived under all this saturnine complexion of manner and

disposition. Nature made her susceptible as quick as she made her habit of showing them deficient or lethargic, and her passions strong in proportion to the depth at which they lay from the surface.

When she and Eliza, at very childish ages, interchanged thoughts upon the great subject which, we humbly presume, first engages the attention of almost all young ladies, aspirations that were only lip-language, or, at most, overheated romance on the part of our heroine, were sincere, serious, and irresistible out-pourings from the heart of Belinda. The one fancied—the other felt all that was said. The one artificially sighed for a lover, in order to convince herself whether or not their eloquent theory of deathless devotion was to be reduced to practice; the other knew it was, in her own person, at least: and if ever a doubt crept in of deceit or treachery from the yet unknown object of the passion she was prepared to lavish, Belinda only decreed an end to her own earthly happiness, or locked up in her soul the manner of self-assertion suggested by her moody character. Indeed, a close intimacy with Belinda—the only close intimacy permitted by that singular young lady—may be said to have taught Eliza all her early romance, and therefore entailed on her some of her present difficulties. Nor was it upon this topic solely that, from their first acquaintance, Eliza deferred to the opinions of her grave friend, or received opinions from her. Belinda's strength of mind, or deep tone of feeling, gained, in fact, over Eliza a predominance that was perhaps as unconsciously exercised as admitted. The very fact of selecting Eliza as the object of her undivided affection, while to all other girls of the school Belinda was cold, distant, and lofty, seemed to patronize at the same time that it flattered and delighted; and impressed Eliza, unknown to herself, with that source of obligation which puts out of the question a consciousness of equality.

If Belinda was unusually serious or abstracted, her lively protegée would curb her gayest gambols. If Belinda slowly smiled a tolerating smile, she would, in exerting only her natural vivacity, make every effort to please and be interesting. If Belinda looked displeased with her, she took it more to heart than she would have taken the deepest frown of her awful school-directress. In a word, Eliza had got into the habit of forming no opinion without submitting it to the judgment of her friend.

And hence, perhaps, it was but natural that Belinda's want of punctuality in answering our heroine's epistle, might have been one of the causes of the part we have seen her acting with her lover. Doubtless, the dear and early friend of her youth was silent because she disapproved the hasty and unworthy transfer of her affections; and perhaps Eliza would commit herself no farther until Belinda afforded her an opportunity for self-vindication.

She was, at all events, about to write a second letter when she

received a note in reply to her first. The young lady had given a promise, as old as the period of their separation at school, to make Eliza a visit; and this note intimated that she was at last able to keep her word, and would, the evening after its arrival, present herself, out of the public coach, at the avenue-gate of Hartley Court.

"The public coach?" questioned Eliza. And, for the first time in her life, she began to ask herself what were the social rank and the connexions of her friend? A young lady of condition need not adopt such a mode of travelling. Nothing was said about her being protected or attended: would she come without a friend and servants, too?

But nothing, or very little, was said about Eliza's letter either, and this omission created questions that absorbed all others. A postcript merely mentioned that the writer would speak, when they met, upon the delicate subject lately communicated. Eliza, much as she loved her only friend, did not rejoice at the announcement. What meant, after months of silence, this cold or mysterious allusion to the matter most dear and interesting to her heart? —Belinda seemed, indeed, to approach like a severe and moody monitor; and as the shades of evening fell, heralding her promised appearance, a corresponding shadow fell over Eliza's spirits.

Punctual to her time, Belinda stepped out of the coach, at the avenue-gate, where a servant from the house awaited her arrival. Eliza, posted half-way down the avenue, and saw, in solution of some former queries,—that, except that servant, her friend came on, indeed, unattended.

Before they met, and while both were in motion, the solemn, almost stern port of the visitor, as her tall, straight figure alternately caught the moonlight, or was plunged in the shadows made by the spaces between the trees, and by the trees themselves, struck Eliza as something more extraordinary than even the dignified coldness with which she had previously been familiar. The former steady pace was more measured, the head more erect, the person more imposingly carried. The friends came within a few paces of each other; and Eliza almost stepped back, as a full ray of not uncongenial light showed her the still more remarkable changes that had taken place on the visage of her class-mate.

When, in the first bloom of young charms, they had bidden each other adieu, Belinda's cheek, though in contrast with Eliza's deserving to be called pale, was not without a delicate colour; her brow, though heavy and black, was arched; her beautiful lips were rich red; and her large, black eye, except when now and then intensely lighted up from her enthusiastic heart, was gentle, or quiet at least, no matter how serious. But now her cheek looked ashy white, and wasted too; her brows, without absolutely frowning, hung low; her lips seemed bloodless and thin; and in her eye was

an expression, fixed, determined, and disagreeable, which had not formerly belonged to it.

They met. Notwithstanding her almost consternation, the impulse of friendship cast Eliza upon her neck; but Belinda's embrace was grave and unimpassioned. Eliza slightly shuddered, as the visitor's spare, chill arms passed round her, and as her cold, wan cheek tamely presented itself for the salute which was not returned. They spoke: and Belinda's voice, once truly musical, though deep-toned, fell on the ear of her young hostess harsh and hollow. None of the old, familiar cadences of friendship modulated it.

After the first greeting was over, they stood some time silently looking into each other's eyes; Belinda gazing vacantly, or with most melancholy recollections; Eliza, not without an expression of fear and distrust. So fearfully, indeed, was she impressed by the alterations of visage, manner, and character which she regarded, that Eliza durst not remark upon them, nor venture to whisper —"How changed you are, Belinda!"

And if become aware of her feelings, Belinda hastened to end the scene.

Slowly taking Eliza's hand,—"Does not the servant walk towards the house?" she asked, and then led her friend up the remainder of the avenue.

Eliza did not feel relieved. As, in reserved silence, Belinda paced along, sensations akin to terror possessed her: it would be difficult to define them; they were made up of womanly weakness, that took a somewhat supernatural turn; and she peered to the right and to the left, amid the moonlight quietness of the scene with which she was so familiar, in vague apprehensions of she knew not what kind, at being now led through it by one that assumed, perhaps, but a mocking likeness of her former friend.

But ere they quite gained the house, Belinda again addressed her.

"So, dear Eliza, your heart has at last been really given away?"

"Oh, I fear—" whispered Eliza.

"And, Eliza, I, too, have known what it is to love since we parted:—to love, and to be a wretch, for ever!"

"Dear Belinda, do not say so! I trust you but anticipate gloomily."

"Well, we shall talk more of *all* these matters, in a few hours or so. How your hand trembles in mine, Eliza! Are you so chilled, indeed?"

"The air is very cold," answered Eliza.

"I do not mind it. These are fine venerable trees at either side of us, and this a sweet walk, when the radiant moon lights up, as now, the gnarled trunks. Are you as partial as ever to moonlight rambles, Eliza?"

"Quite, Belinda."

"I forgot;—you should be:—you have now an additional cause to preserve your early preference." The young lady spoke this in a tone of suppressed emotion, and a deep, wretched sigh escaped her.

They entered the house. In the tranquil, and as it were domestic light of the hall, Eliza was able to call back, in a degree, her scared feelings. She retained her friend's hand an instant, and gazed, now with more sorrow than fear, upon her features.

"Yes," answered Belinda, to her silent look; "I have been very ill, Eliza!"

"What illness! Fever? or what, Belinda?"

"This," answered the visitor, violently pressing her clenched hand against her heart, with an energy vehemently unfeminine.

Eliza again felt her spirits strangely affected. She commissioned a servant to attend Belinda to dress in her chamber.

Dinner had been retarded in expectation of the visitor; and as soon as Belinda reappeared, it was announced.

Sir Thomas Hartley seemed impressed by the commanding person and mien of his daughter's friend; and when conversation ensued, his favourable opinions rose higher. Belinda, somewhat condescending from the austere dignity of her first manner, displayed abundance of just remark and lofty sentiment, that convinced the Baronet she had an intellect of the highest order; and the evening closed with a feeling, on his part, of profound respect for her understanding and taste, and not a little of prepossession for her personal attractions; which, though clouded and dimmed to Eliza's eye, and though in their best day never remarkable for any of the true feminine bewitchment that stealthily pervades every recess of the heart ere one is aware of its influence, still had a strong effect upon Sir Thomas.

Miss Alicia's stateliness sank prostrate before Belinda; and although the visitor condescendingly, and perhaps a little contemptuously, bestowed much of her attention upon the worthy lady, her good-natured but meagre remarks seemed to have lost their value, even in her own estimation.

At the hour of retiring, Eliza, obeying a hint from her guest, accompanied Belinda to her chamber.

They entered the apartment in silence. Belinda closed the door, motioned Eliza to a seat, became seated herself, then leaned her head upon her hand; and, excepting the wo-begone sighs, almost groans, that escaped her, both were still silent. Eliza would have spoken first, but had not heart to do so. Some of the former qualings of her spirit to the solitary influence of Belinda, began to return. As the small lamp, not illuminating a third of the expanse of the old apartment, gave its full flicker to the bent features of the disturbed young lady, Eliza thought she could see her cheeks fade into deeper paleness, her brows accumulate their full gloom.

and the lines about her mouth grow more rigid; and when, at last, the visitor suddenly lifted up her eyes as she prepared to speak, they again were full of their novel and strange expression.

"Now, Eliza, we will converse about your affairs."

The listener inwardly shrank from the hollow tones in which the proposal was made, as well, indeed, as from at all discussing, in such a sad and doleful fashion, topics that she had always thought should be graced with smiles and roses.

"But first," Belinda continued, "let me speak a word of something that may well lead to your love-tale: let me speak of myself.

"If my former depth of character and of heart has not surprised you, its present wretched manifestation evidently does. You have a right to know more about that heart than you ever knew before: and perhaps a glance at its earliest history is needful to explain its recent experience and present situation.

"Nature doubtlessly made me what I am; yet the habits and thoughts of childhood must have been a second nature to me. I was brought up in solitude, amongst mountain scenery of the wildest and grandest character, and at an early age found myself almost alone with it, to form my mind and influence my feelings. The boldness of the hill-tops and hill-sides filled my fancy with lofty thoughts; and the lovely, green valleys, often lying between them, helped to give me, perhaps, the softness and tenderness that once formed a portion of Belinda.

Ere I went to school, constant thinking, and constant watching of my own heart, and attending to its least appeals, made me long for an opportunity to love and be loved. You and I met, and our friendship was the first indulgence of my impulses. But our conversations on another interchange of affection, must have proved to you how entirely my happiness and hopes in this life were doomed to be won or lost upon a single chance. That single chance is now played, Eliza;—played, and decided against me.

"With a mind only improved into more refined views of my early prepossession, and a heart only more delicately susceptible to its influence, I returned to my mountain solitude. Let me be candid, at least; I returned still worse prepared for it. Though this is the first time you have guessed the secret, learn, that ere we parted at school, I loved the only man that, till the earth hides me, can waken a love-sigh in my bosom.

"You seem surprised. I do not wonder. Eliza, you were even by my side when I first beheld him. Do not interrupt me—and do not think of asking me to be more minute; it will be in vain. Let me only continue my dark story.

"Soon after I left school, he joined me upon one of my lonely mountain paths. We became more intimately acquainted. He seemed to love me ardently. *I* loved to adoration. I gave away my heart, my existence, to his keeping, and——" powerful emo-

tion, as powerfully combatted, stopped her ere she added—"he proved traitor to his trust."

"Alas, dearest Belinda!"

"He left me—left me, without one sigh, to roam over the solitary walks I had walked with him, now rendered hateful for his abandonment. Do you still wonder at the cheek and brow I wear, Eliza?

"Indeed, my poor Belinda, I pity you:"—and Eliza, at length more softened than appalled, threw her arms round the neck of her early friend.

"Well. I have come, with my withered-up heart, to talk to you, Eliza, of your own love. You say, the sentiment you now feel is stronger than your former affection for that young Harry Talbot?"

"Oh, Belinda! not only a stronger sentiment, but a different one."

"In turn, then, I cry, 'Alas!' for you. It will never bring you happiness."

"Belinda!"

"Take counsel, Eliza, of the wounded deer. Stake not happiness, life, on such a venture as the chance of mutual affection. It was our school-dream, nothing more. It is not to be found in a world where MEN are to decide the chance. Women only can love. Those cold and cruel ones but toy with the trifle.

"I think, nay, I am certain, Belinda, that I cannot be deceived—he truly loves."

"Tush!" cried Belinda, in bitter scorn, "did not I think so too? Have not the thousands of our wretched sex who, day after day, vainly become our shame and our warning, thought it? Child, child, but a few months ago I would have sworn to you that he, who now shows himself a base villain, lived only on my smile, or for my happiness. Hearken. I come hither to warn you. Tear the dangerous mistake from your heart. It is a gentle, timid, quaking heart, and, were you left desolate, would droop and sicken, hour by hour, till death brought it relief, without vengeance. It would not, like mine, harden in the fire of rage that consumed it, until it grew into a means of revenge, dangerous as their own sharpened steel, upon the head of the supercilious traitor. Ay, you may stare at me!"—she continued, as Eliza showed alarm at the increased energy of her words, voice, and eyes—"but my betrayer shall yet repair or repent his crime, and learn that one woman, at least, was not born to be the passive slave of his pleasures. Because the lamb looked not milder when I smiled trustingly upon him, he thinks that, outraged and scorned, I cannot start to my feet with more than the spirit of the wild beast in my heart!"

Eliza now arose, and with clasped hands, and cheeks as pale as those of her passionate friend, besought her to curb her feelings.

"Curb your own, Eliza: that is still my word; the word I have come to your house to speak—and to speak in solemn warning. Oh! my first friend, listen not lightly to it. Let it be an antidote to the bane—the deadly poison, that now throbs feverishly in your bosom, only as the precursor of its own withering desolation. But if you slight my counsel—and if, at a future day, you feel the pang that now rends me—maddens me,—remember, Belinda's warning. Your fate be on your own head, Eliza Hartley, for you *are* forewarned.

"Belinda, you terrify me—indeed you do;" Eliza stood trembling from head to foot. "Good-night—or let me only call for lights:" the small chamber-lamp had flickered so low as to leave them almost in darkness.

"Good-night, then—" said Belinda, stalking after her, while she shrank towards the door. "Your hand, dear Eliza: I did not wish to terrify; I am sorry if I have done so:—good-night, dear friend;—and the good night is enough; I want no brighter light to tend me to my pillow:—farewell; but—" as Eliza hurried over the threshold, "do not forget the warning:—you will find it 'a prophecy.' "

They separated for the night. We cannot testify if the sanguine Belinda slept; but our heroine's couch often shook to her terrified startings from her broken slumbers. Many were the shapes in which fancy presented a result of her friend's solemn warning. Now there was a victim, weltering in his blood, whose pale features resembled Harry Talbot; now she gazed, in worldless consternation, on the mangled body of her new lover; anon, it was a stranger upon whom fell the mixed effects of Belinda's prophecy and vow of vengeance; or she watched her father's corse, her heart telling her that Belinda was his murderess; or, in the fantastic gravity of dreams, Eliza looked down on her own untimely bier, and still it was her friend who made it. The morning sun glanced in through the chinks of the oaken shutters of her chamber window, ere Eliza sank into undisturbed sleep.

Long after her usual hour, she awoke. Her first recollection brought before her the pale, stern, and impassioned face of Belinda, as she had last seen it; and Eliza involuntarily shuddered. Assisted by a calling-up of the visions of her disturbed sleep, the solemn caution Belinda had given almost equally affected her, though she could not satisfy her reason why it should do so. It was surely nothing more than an ebullition of the strong passion which agitated her friend, thus bursting out with the peculiar vehemence of Belinda's character. There is an egotism even in wretchedness, which, out of circumstances similar to those that have produced itself, will augur wretchedness to every one else; and some such principle must have supplied matter for Belinda's paroxysm, on this occasion.

Yet, to bring the circumstance even to this simple shape, to behold the passion of love producing such frantic excess of feeling as in Belinda's person was exhibited,—startled Eliza nearly as much as the most vague of her former omens. What would be her own state of mind, if her dearest affections were flung back upon her with scorn and contempt? Bitter misery was in the prospect. Had she not better begin to curb her trusting and irresistible devotion to an object, who possibly—but no! that could not be; his very soul was centred in her slightest look or movement.

Belinda had indeed prophesied his treachery. But stripping her augury of every thing but the egotism Eliza had before ascribed as its prompter, there was another way of arguing the case. Was Belinda a woman to be truly and perseveringly loved? Was she not too passionate, too moody, and too violent? and might not a discovery of her unfitness to promote happiness have reasonably disgusted her lover?

Then, was Eliza herself so likely to revolt the man who had once given her his affection? The "no" soon followed. Besides, there were hundreds of instances in which men proved themselves even more faithfully attached than women. In fact, the whole matter that had so fearfully disturbed her, now seemed, as far as she was concerned, ridiculous; "and I am a weak-minded fool," thought Eliza, "and I will shake off the timidity of spirit, that, without being able to assign a cause, thus bows before one who seems herself to act more from headstrong impulse than from sober reason."

And yet, once again, the pale and distorted face of her young friend filled with its newly come character and meaning, arrested the mind's eye of Eliza; and, once again, our heroine's nerves failed her as a terrible question occurred.

"Good Heaven! is she insane?"

Much of incoherency and wildness certainly appeared in Belinda's manner and sentiments. The thought grew more distressing; but, at the same time, it still farther stripped her words of import. In any view, they could have no reference to Eliza.

Thus revolving the events of the preceding night, she finished her toilet. And then she moved herself, to make Belinda a hospitable call at her chamber door, upon the first morning of her visit at Hartley Court.

"We shall now converse quietly and sensibly like sensible people, and on terms of perfect equality too," resolved Eliza.

But Belinda was not in her chamber. Eliza descended to the breakfast parlour, and found it, also unoccupied, save by Miss Alicia. Tim Reily respectfully motioned her to the door.

"The masther is set out to look afther the cracked lady that come last night, Miss Eliza."

Eliza startled, "Cracked lady, Sir?"

"That's what myself takes her to be, Miss; as cracked as Polly Mac Namara, that wanted me to go take tey wid her in the moon: only I tould her to wait, as you may suppose, an' for good rasons, Miss."

"Why do you say this, Timothy?"

"I'll tell you that, Miss Eliza: 'Twas just at the break'n o' the mornin', an' I was in a raal *sauvaun** of a sleep; when I thought to myself, I hard somebody callin' out, 'Tim Reily! Tim! Tim!' Wid that I cocked my elbow undher me, an' listened: an' sure enough, 'Tim! Tim!' was called over again.—'Don't bother me,' says I; 'let me finish my drhame!'—'Get up, you sleepy hound!' says the voice, 'don't you hear the dhrawin'-room bell ringin' the house down?'—'Who's ringin' id, Peggy,' says I; for now I knew Peggy's own voice, Miss Eliza,—she sleeps nigh hand the bell. 'Go, an' thry, Tim!' says Peggy.—'Wait for us, Peggy!' says I, makin' answer.—'Och! yes, indeed,' says Peggy; an' as I gave a lip up, she ran like the wind. Well, now I hard the ringin' myself, Miss Eliza; 'An' I wondher what's the matther,' says I; 'may be it's the poor ould house is a-fire;' and then I brought to mind oncet on a time, when Miss Alice's ould cat stuck in the bell-pull, and brought me runnin' up, in the middle iv a winther's night, to attend her ladyship: an' faix! I was for goin' to bed once again, when another loud ring come—"

"Timothy, I cannot remain listening to your tedious story!"

"Don't turn off for a little start, Miss Eliza, an' I'll go bail we'll come to id!"

But as, notwithstanding this promise, Miss Eliza did turn off before much more was told, we cannot follow Tim through the whole of his detail. At another time, indeed, she and we might, perhaps, have smiled at his recital; given, as it was, with the utmost care to "suit the action to the word." He stooped to imitate the cautious, squeaking voice, that called "Tim! Tim!" he gave a bounce to convey properly his manner of leaping up from his couch; a short run across the hall to describe Peggy's flight; and then he hastily set to robe himself in dumb show; working his arms up and down his person till they sank petrified at his side, as he mentioned the last bell-ring. Having impatiently reentered the breakfast parlour, Eliza summoned Tim; and, with a caution to avoid his former digressions, directed him to end his story, by answering her only a few words to whatever she should each time demand of him. The narrative accordingly proceeded in the form of question and answer, to the following effect: that Belinda was the person who at break of day had rung for an attendant; that, upon his appearance in the drawing-room, she

* Comfortable drowsiness.

got from him the key of the hall door, and went out; that, since his "raal sauvaun" was broken up, he thought he might as well have a walk himself; that he went into the plantation before described, as bordering on the river; that, from its concealment, he observed certain actions on the part of the strange lady, which, taken with the fact of her issuing forth alone, "at sich an unchristian hour o' the mornin', when no one bud a fool iv a bird 'ud lave his bed; or a worse fool iv a worm, to put himself in the bird's way!" convinced Tim that the lady was, as he termed it, "cracked!" Eliza now required an exact account of the proceedings of Belinda, to which he had yet only generally alluded: but here Tim once more broke bounds, and would or could answer in his own way, or not at all. While he described her as first looking up for some time, at the top of the ash-tree, with the identity of which Eliza and we are well acquainted; then, as clasping her hands and talking to herself; then, as rushing to the water's edge; and then suddenly kneeling on the grass; and, lastly, at starting up, and walking, in a hurried manner, out of his view;—while these different actions were mentioned, the following came in by way of illustration:—"Here she went,"—putting himself into a solemn attitude, and turning up his eyes,—"wow, wow, wow," throwing his face into a pensive cast, moving his lips, and emitting a sound which denoted that the voice, without words, reached his ear. Anon he walked forward:—"this yallow sthrip o' the carpet is the river, I'm supposin', Miss Eliza;" and he looked down with a ludicrous melancholy of countenance; soon after dropped on his knee; sprang up; walked quickly to the door; turned round; bowed, as actors do ere the curtain falls; and—"That's the very way it was, Miss Eliza," he said; "and don't you call them cracked capers?"

"Now, Sir," resumed Eliza, in a tone of grave and severe remonstrance,—"I have, thus far, tolerated your very impertinent remarks on this young lady, only because I wished to ascertain how far all the facts you could mention would bear out the opinion you presumed to form, and, with so much buffoonery, to declare to me. Mark what I proceed to say. If to any other person you dare thus lightly mention the name of Miss St. John, I will,—notwithstanding even the good service by favour of which you hold your present place—(without gracing it, I must add)—immediately apply to Sir Thomas to have you dismissed. And now begone, Sir," anxious to get the man away, lest the expression of grief at her displeasure, mixing with his habitual buffoonery of features, might deprive her of all command of her own countenance.

Tim made his penitent bow, and his exit; not really cast down, however.

"Divil a concarn it is o'mine!" he soliloquized, as he crossed the hall:—"all Tim has a right to be on the watch for, is to take

good care she doesn't get nigh enough to bite him; an' I don't think I'll let her; she couldn't come round that, barrin' she was mighty sweet on me, aforehand; so, I'm on my guard. An' by the hokey, we have a one to kiss us, widout offerin' to snap at us, purtier and claner than she was, so we have, by the hokey!" and with a caper, notifying his rapture at the thought, he danced down to the kitchen, to know "what's the rason Peggy made the noise so arly, that mornin'?"

CHAPTER V.

Shortly after Timothy's disappearance from the parlour, Eliza saw Belinda and her father coming up the avenue. At a nearer approach, Belinda's face seemed much more than on the previous night, to wear the likeness of her early friend and class-mate. Deep sadness, rather than high and strange excitement, was now its prevailing expression; and her large jet-black eye, though still lucid with a portion of its recent vagueness, or meaning, was less disagreeable than it had been. "Perhaps," thought Eliza, "the lovely presence of nature has relieved my poor friend, by calling forth some weeping bursts of her smothered passion."

Sir William Judkin had now been some days from home. At parting from Eliza he had named a time for returning, but came not as punctually as it did. Our heroine was anxious for his arrival. Apart from the pleasure of seeing him, great in anticipation as that was, she wished that Belinda might judge, from his presence, what little ground appeared for her fears of his constancy and honour. Eliza also longed to have her admit that Sir William was, in every respect, worthy of a lady's love, or, according to Malvolio, worth a lady's eye."

A very slight hint served to send Nanny the Knitter, to inquire the cause of his absence. He could not return for another week. Particular business, connected, in fact, with the arrangement of part of his late uncle's embarrassments, unavoidably detained him.

During this listless pause, although Eliza and Belinda took many walks together, they were not so frequently in each other's company as they had been at school. The visitor seemed to prefer solitary rambles, and when confined to the house, generally, excepting at meal-times, sat alone in her chamber. Eliza's spirits grew saddened and depressed. Her lover's absence, and the bale-

ful shadow thrown round her by her friend's melancholy, jointly produced the effect; for, since their conversation upon the night of her arrival at Hartley Court, deep melancholy and reserve, instead of her first agitating vehemence, continued to characterize Belinda. That memorable conversation was not resumed. Eliza sought not its renewal, and her friend never by a single word alluded to it.

For some days beyond a week, Belinda St. John had been at Hartley Court, without bringing joy or gratification to her youthful companion, or making a friend around her. At Tim Reily's showing, notwithstanding his mistress's orders and caution, the servants deemed her "flighty," or "cracked;" or, waving this opinion, the meanest among them revolted at her unbending, imperious coldness. She was attended by them merely as their master's guest, without any inclination to do her a kindness.

Sir Thomas Hartley, indeed, still conversed with her on topics generally supposed out of the range of those with which it is sought to entertain a young lady; but her rayless gloom of character and manner had evidently destroyed his first interest. Miss Alice absolutely dreaded her stern brow; it made the amiable old lady wince, she knew not why. And it must be supposed, that all this could not escape the observation of the person most interested; yet, she did not seem to notice any thing. She was always wrapped up in herself, or, to the exclusion of every exterior interest, employed with her own thoughts.

Upon the eleventh night after her visit, (Eliza remembered it well,) our heroine had retired to her chamber, when Nanny the Knitter sent up from the kitchen, a respectful request to be permitted an audience. The boon was granted. With many duckings, and much dusting of her feet with the tail of her cloak, the old woman entered the chamber, and, as if conscious that nothing appertaining to, or at all bringing to mind the other sex, should presume to appear there, she took off and left outside the door her foxy man's hat.

"Sit down, Nanny; you look tired," said Eliza.

"Thankee kindly, Miss Eliza my honey; bud, wid your purty lave, I'll just plank myself on my hunkers, the way I'm in the fashion o' doin', an' the way that's most fitter for my sort, in the same room wid one o' the quality."

Eliza concluded, from Nanny's face, that she had something of importance to communicate. But even Nanny's preparatory proceedings would have intimated as much. After having "planked herself on her hunkers," she deliberately took out her knitting apparatus, which, with her, in every presence, and under every circumstance, was as necessary a preliminary to chat, as was his few inches of thread to the forensic orator mentioned in the Spectator. If he could not properly twist the thread of his plain cause without

simultaneously twisting his pack-thread, Nanny, also, should be permitted to knit her stockings and her narrative together.

With ominous rapidity, Eliza's thoughts flew from Nanny's solemn preparation, and her mysterious countenance, to Belinda's prognostic that her love would prove unfortunate; and, fearful that the question might produce the mention of Sir William's name in some way distressing or dishonouring to herself, she dreaded to demand Nanny's business. At length Nanny broke silence.

"What I have to say, Miss Eliza my pet, 'ud be betther tould betuxt yoursef an' mysef; an' so, you may all as well send the good little girl to her bed."

"Why, Nanny, this is a solemn and formal preface you make: what can be the matter? Does it relate to me?"

"It does, an' it does n't, my honey pet; an' there's every word o' the thruth for you—don't let it bother you—now," after she had momentarily contemplated Eliza's features—"there's nothin' in id about your father, Sir Thomas, the blessins on him, or about Square Talbot, that we wish well, though we want no more rubbins wid him, or about Sir William, the darlin' iv a boy; not a word in the world; it's all about women: an' the most about one sart'n woman, or lady—I don't know which is the right name to call her."

As soon as, in her own way, Nanny had come to the name she knew Eliza thought of, our gentle heroine felt much relieved. And now she rang her bell; told her maid, who appeared in answer to it, that she could dispense with her for the night,—Nanny was going to tell her a story: and, as it grew late, her tire-woman need not remain up. Accordingly, Nanny and her protegée continued alone without fear of interruption.

"An' now, Miss Eliza my honey, would id be in coorse o' manners to ax what kind iv a lady she is that come to see you, here, in your good father's house?"

"First—why do you put such a question, Nanny?"

"Faix, an' indeed, my honey-pet, I have a good rason to ax you, let alone any rason I wouldn't daare to have out o' curiosity, and all out of love an' duty to your pretty sef; the same I'm in duty bound;—bud—first, too—it's what *I'd* want is to know if you're sart'n sure of the sort she is?"

"Well, Nanny, to indulge your good wishes towards me, and while I am convinced you would not lightly intrude on this occasion, I admit that I know little more of Miss St. John than that she has been my school-acquaintance,—friend, indeed,—and always supposed of high birth and blood;—but farther—though her manners certainly bear out the last fact—I, to this hour, know nothing."

"That's not the thing I was for axin', Miss Eliza my honey."

"What, then, did your question import?"

"May I never do an ill turn, this holy an' blessed night,"—Nanny bent over her knitting, and spoke in a very low whisper—"but she's either moon-sthruck then, or, I'm afraid, mad, out-an'-out—or else, this—a bould woman, Lord keep us from cratures o' the kind, an' from all evil doins!"

"Have a care, Nanny:—the young lady is my friend—is in my father's house: you astonish me—shock me."

"Oh, faix, an' as I'm a lump iv a sinner, Miss Eliza my honey, blessed be the Holy Name! that's the way I was in, my own sef, wid what I seen, on the head iv id."

Tell your story, Nanny,—but, remember—carefully and faithfully."

"That I mayn't sin, Miss Eliza, bud you'll have id, as thrue an' as clane as if I was on my marrow-bones fornent the priest."

"It was eve-a-last night, my pet,—an' sure that was the last night o' the month, of all nights in the year,—I was at Andy Maher's wake, rest his poor sowl!—"

"Nanny, you seem determined to tire my patience."

"Ntchu, ntchu"—we cannot find better orthography for the smack of Nanny's tongue against her palate.

"Ntchu, ntchu,—och, sure there's nothin' farther from my thoughts, Miss Eliza my honey, as in duty bound to you and yours,—an' to yoursef, above all; bud, my ould tongue has sich a way of clack, clack, ever an' always; an' I'm so *cooramuch*,* sittin' here; so purty an' so snug, bless the good providhers! Well, to come sthraight upon the thing we're discoorsing about. It was apast twelve in the night when I left the wake, Miss Eliza my honey; I was going to take my bed at Shaun-a-gow's, that night; Shaun, himsef, was at the wake, an' so I knew I could get in; and, whether or no, it's seldom's the time for this while agone, you'll get them in their honest, quite beds at Shaun-a-gow's; they do have roarin' work at the anvil, in the forge, at night, more nor by day; an' the boys comes there, I'm tould, to get wicked weapons made for themsefs our iv ould iron of all sorts. The times is growin' bad, I'm afeard, Miss Eliza my pet, for us poor women; there'll be bad doins goin' on, as sure as this needle is runnin' to an' fro': the Lord purtect the poor, an' the wake, an' the forlorn! Bud I'll tell you all about these doins, another time, when we'll have the night to oursefs an' nothin' else to spake iv.—Ntchu, ntchu;—Well.—As I was thramping to Shaun-a-gow's, just as I come widin a little sthtrech o' the aveny gate, below,—you know, Miss, I seldom or never makes much noise wid the way o' walkin' I have—"

Eliza nodded assent.

"The moon was a late one, Miss Eliza my honey; it was'nt high up enough to shine down sthraight; but the light iv id was

* Exceedingly comfortable.

here an' there, whenever nothin' was to the fore to shet id out. You know there's a little wood, like, runnin' down to the river, that wouldn't let id shine through; an' so the road, at that place, was purty dark; an' then the aveny threes gave a help to make id a bit darker; bud, through the arch that's fornen the gate, it come bould, as white as any sheet, an' looked quare an' odd. 'Well,' says I to mysef, 'isn't id a curos way the moon shines over that one place; an' its purty,' says I, 'to look on id, when a body is in a right mind, an' not afear'd, at sich a time o' the night: bud'—says I, agin, stoppin' talkin', 'what's that goin' through id?' an' I stopped the feet, too, to look closer. I seen a tall woman, Miss Eliza, comin' over the stile at the side o' the aveny gate, an' she crossed right along the sheet o' moonshine, and she went undher the arch. At the first look, it was, for all the world, as like a ghost as one egg is like another—a ghost that ud be warmin' itsef in moonlight thracks, after comin' out o' the could darkness that was round about id, every where. I often hard o' ghosts; an', sure an' sure, there's sich things, they say,—the praises be for ever given, I never seen one yet, though I thravelled often by night, in the most lonesome places. Bud, a ghost's foot doesn't give a sound—not as much as my own foot, that gives so little—an' I hard the stamp, stamp, through the silence acrass the road; for I was nigh hand, Miss Eliza my honey'—an'—that's the lady that come to see Miss Eliza, says I; she's cracked in the brains, they say, an' goes about this way to be spakin' her *raumaush** to the moon, as her likes has the fashion o' doin', the world over."

"Can this, indeed, be possible?" ejaculated Eliza, much moved; "you may have mistaken the person, Nanny?"

"I know'd her gate o' walkin, Miss Eliza, my honey, afther she tuck the first start out o' me; but id come into my head, I'd make more sure."

"And did you quite assure yourself?"

"Harken me out, my honey. I came here, to the house, the last night, an' I got my own little bed,—may the blessins o' this life an' the next be in store for the givers; an' my good supper afore id; an' I said my share o' night prayers near the fire, afore I went to my sleep, though my thought was taken to sleep little. As soon as ever there was silence, widin' an' widout, I rose up, an'—knowin' the ould house so well—I stole,—asy, asy,—to the stair-foot, in the hall—sure it's time for me to know the ins an' outs iv id, as well as another; an' no wondher. Well, I opened the dour that lades down from the hall into the kitchen—sorrow's in id for one dour, it nigh frightened me, wid its craking—an' I peeped about an' about. An' it wasn't long till the clock sthruck, an' I reckoned the sthrokes, one by one, till I counted a good dozen. 'It's

* Nonsense.

about the time,' says I, thinkin'. Well, my pet; it wasn't very long, agin, till I hard a foot comin' down the stairs, an' I shet the dour, asier than I opened id, all bud a little, an' I spied out through the split. An', sure enough, I seen the body I was spyin' for, unlockin' the parlour dour. She had a candle in her hand; so I could remark her. In she stepped, as asy as myself could do id; bud, for as cute as she went to work, I hard her takin' the bar from the winder——"

"What!" interrupted Eliza, terrified; "are you quite certain, Nanny?"

"Wait, my pet; an' I hard the winder risin' up, ever so quite an azy, agin; an' id went down, then, an' the shetthers came together, closin' outside. I waited a space, an' I stole into the room; an' I seen the candle in the grate; an' I seen she pult the shetthers afther her, as soon as she got out."

"Shocking! Did you then go to rest, Nanny?"

"No, my honey! that 'ud be lavin' the stockin' unfinished for the sake o' the last one or two rows. No, faix. I waited an' waited in the hall; an' it was a good hour, or more nor an hour, afore I hard her steps comin' to the winder; an' then I stole behint the door that lades to the kitchen, over agin; an' I hard *her* stalin' in; an' boultin' the winder afther her; an' lockin' the parlour-dour the way she found id; an' goin' up stairs, wid her candle in her hand; an', as she crossed the hall, sure I seen her, face to face, through the split."

"Oh, this is terrible, Nanny! What am I to do?—how arrange? It must not be made a talking matter, whatever happens;—tell me, Nanny, have you communicated these matters to any other person?"

"To no livin' soul, Miss Eliza; 'for,' says I, it wouldn't be the best way to make a noise o' the thing, because the honey, Miss Eliza, ud gain no good will by havin' id known or said she war friends wid a bould woman like her, Lord keep us all far from one o' the sort!—or if she's not so bad, only cracked an' moonsthruck, it wouldn't be charity to tell the world o' the poor cratures *tanthrums*."*

"I am obliged by your consideration and prudence, Nanny; and, till I make up my mind on the subject, you have my commands to act the same part. You could not possibly be mistaken in the person?"

"Ntchu, ntchu; wasn't id to make cock-sure I done all this, Miss Eliza?—an'—bud, Lord save us!" lowering her voice, and raising two fingers, with a knitting-needle stuck between them—"hushth! what's that, now!"

With startled features and breath kept in, Eliza listened. Be-

* Mad vagaries.

linda's chamber was the third from her's, in a corridor passage that ran the length of the back of the house. Eliza distinctly heard a door creak on its hinges. A stately and measured step then came along the passage. She was in an agony of terror, she knew not why. Nanny stole, without fully rising from her former position, to Eliza's side, where, again squatting "on her hunkers," she looked like an old puss much startled in her form. The step stopped at the door of our heroine's chamber. The handle turned. Eliza, unconsciously, laid her hand on Nanny's shoulder; while, on her part, the at last discomfited Knitter held fast by the young lady's skirts. The door opened, and Belinda St. John, at her usual slow pace, but with an unusual dignity, joined to a renewal of the high excitement of features that had formerly terrified Eliza, walked into the apartment.

"She hard me," whispered Nanny, "an' I'll get my killin' from her.

"Eliza Hartley," said Belinda, not seeming to notice the conscience-stricken Nanny, "I am come to bid you a farewell."

"To bid a farewell, Belinda!" Eliza strove to compose her features and control her nerves.

"Yes, my early friend. True, you are surprised, and I do not wonder. You cannot conjecture why I should, at this strange hour, and so suddenly, prefer to depart. Let it suffice that I have reasons for my conduct, which I cannot now explain, but which, at another time, you may perhaps learn."

So far, Belinda had addressed herself to Eliza, in the middle of the chamber, a good distance from her and Nanny.

"Dear Belinda, it will seem strange, not to say unkind, if you indeed leave us in such a manner," resumed Eliza.

"You do me only justice to wave the charge of unkindness. Strange it may seem—I cannot help that; unkind to you I am not in thought or heart. And other parts of my conduct, while under your roof, will, no doubt, seem very strange too. You do not know that, when sleep closed the eyes of all other dwellers in Hartley Court, I have been rambling in the dear moonlight, about your lovely walks here."

Nanny gave a cautious pull at Eliza's skirt.

"But, whatever turn my fancies may receive, I am not, as I have heard some menials in your house whisper, Eliza—I am not mad."

She advanced a step, and Nanny caused to recede the only portion of her round person which, from the way in which she sat, she could prudently put in motion. Belinda continued—

"Believe me, Eliza,—although of late, I have thought, until my mind spun towards the verge of insanity, Belinda is yet mistress of herself, and perfectly understands the why and wherefore of her actions. To others, her intellect, with her fate, may appear dark-

ened. Farewell. I will shortly clear up all doubtful appearances.—Your hand."

As she continued very slowly to advance, Nanny increased her twitches at Eliza's skirt, accompanying them with what she would term "nudges" of her elbow, as she again whispered—

"Don't put thrust in her, Miss Eliza, my pet—it's their cute way o' talkin', till they can once lay hoult. Bid her stay off, an' let us call up Tim an' the poor masther."

But Eliza's self-possession had in a degree returned. She arose to receive her friend's adieus, still pressing upon her, and now more warmly than before, the propriety of deferring her departure until morning.

"No, Eliza, it cannot be. I did not even intend to disturb you: after writing you a note, I had purposed to leave Hartley Court by stealth; but seeing your light, I concluded you had not retired to rest, and then could not resist the temptation of a personal farewell. God bless you, my earliest, and now only friend—What! do you fear me? Am I doomed to lose your love too?"

"Fear you, dear Belinda," answered Eliza, with a forced smile. "what folly would you suppose? Farewell, if it must be so"—tears wetted the cheek she had held out for a salute.

"Eliza," whispered Belinda, ere she completed her farewells. "my first and last words must be the same. Be faithful to your first love—or—remember the warning.

She solemnly kissed Eliza's pallid cheeks, and slowly paced out of the chamber. Nanny and our heroine heard her open the parlour-window. They did not exchange a word. But, when sufficient time had elapsed to suppose her fairly out of the house and out of hearing, Nanny, re-establishing herself in the full comfort of her usual sitting position, and gathering together her somewhat deranged knitting apparatus, said, with a relieving sigh.—"An' a good riddance, Miss Eliza, my honey."

Eliza Hartley and Belinda St. John did not soon meet again: but when they did, it was amid scenes of grief and horror, for an account of which, the reader must have patience to wait till almost our closing chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

In the calmer reflection of the ensuing morning, Eliza's terrors gave way to mere surprise. All her former arguments against attaching any importance to Belinda's prophecy were severally gone over with renewed success; and supposing her friend not mad, the singularity of the young lady's conduct while at Hartley Court, was the sole matter connnected with her, that now engaged our heroine.

But the mystery of Belinda's actions remained impervious. Eliza could not fully credit her assertion, that her midnight rambles had been taken merely out of a preference for nocturnal exercise in the open air; and she vainly set about assigning or discovering another cause. In vain, too, did Nanny exercise her keenest and most cautious scrutiny; and our heroine was obliged to content herself with the disagreeable, and, in recollection of former days of pure and virtuous friendship, the distressing inference, that they could be no proper motives which induced Belinda to put on with her conccalment the appearance, at least, of impropriety.

In about a week from the scene with which the former chapter concluded, Sir William Judkin re-appeared at Hartley Court; and in the sunshine of his fascinating society Eliza's disquietudes gradually faded away. Belinda's prophecy only called up a smile, as, seated by her lover's side, she received, day after day, new proofs of his tender and ardent devotion; and the whole recollection of her old school-fellow's visit, of its mystery, its gloom, and its dispiriting impressions, had no more effect than the dream of night, which, in possession of our senses, and surrounded by friends and substantial happiness, we recombine by snatches, rather for mirth than out of fear.

No matter what we have previously conjectured concerning our dear heroine's deferring practices with her lover, one ground for her procrastination we do now venture, out of a feeling for her, altogether to give up:—she could not, surely, share any of the nature of the household cat, when that little half-tamed hyena sports with her prey, and seems merely to laugh out at its lengthened anguish. And whatever may really have been Eliza's former reasons for keeping her captive in similar agonies, it is with equal satisfaction, still, on her account, that we can at last announce his present comparative state of felicity. So, upon the morning of a day dedicated to an excursion, in which the reader shall accompany

him, Sir William, when he least expected to hear them, caught the few accents that made him an extatic man; and, although between his speculative approval as a lover, and his real acceptance in another character, Miss Alicia, alive to the proprieties as well as to the sweets of the tender passion, contrived, by a formal interference with Sir Thomas and her niece, to cast a weary interval of probation; still, while the lover prepared to attend his mistress upon the excursion mentioned—an excursion, by the way, doomed to influence the fate of both, his newly acquired certainty of mutual attachment, conferred a tranquil joy, which not even that tantalizing prospect could for the present, at least, disturb.

The reader will please to observe, that our heroine, and, of course, all our other personages, are now six months older than when he and they first became acquainted. We have arrived, in fact, at the season when white-bearded Winter lords it over the infant year. It is the month of January, 1798,—that baleful year which, yet in its cradle, was doomed to witness, in Ireland, such scenes of convulsion, of carnage, and of horror, as, to this day, leave a shuddering recollection amongst the inhabitants of our country. "They were dreadful times," the Irish peasant will mutter; "may we never see the like again!"

A party of dragoons, on their route from Wexford, where they had been quartered, seized, at the market of the next village, the horses of some of Sir Thomas's tenantry, over-loaded them with baggage, ill-used them, and, at the termination of a long march, not only gave no payment for their services, but exacted money before they would restore them. Some of the same regiment subsequently made an incursion into his neighbourhood, laid hands on the property of his poorer dependents, and, when remuneration was sought, bestowed only blows and insult. Sir Thomas made application for redress to their commanding officer; and the answer, "that the *Croppy* rascals were treated as they deserved," by no means satisfied his ideas of justice. He resolved to appeal to higher authority. The announcement of a review by an inspecting general of the military force of the county, seemed to afford him opportunity. He would state his case of grievance to the general, on the review field, in the face of the soldiers and their officers; and this was for him an unfortunate resolution.

Eliza, not unagitated at the idea of a muster of so many hundreds of red-coated heroes, prayed to be allowed to accompany her father; and true as the index to the hour, the needle to its pole, the shadow to its substance, (we wish we could, without much pause or trouble, invent some new figure,) her knight waited upon her. But, by the way, though the last figure, like the other two, is hackneyed enough, and though we cannot replace it with an original one, it strikes us that, at least, a novel use may be made of it. Are not human attachments more variously comparable with sub-

stance and shadow than allusion has hitherto shown them? When the sun shines, or even when the less lustrous moon is brilliant, the shade attends upon the person who walks in the beam of either; but, alas! when clouds or storms blot out the god of the firmament, or when the moon is gone, and darkness wraps the world, the duteous shadow is no longer in waiting. And, during the gloom of our reverses, is it not just so with the obsequious followers in the blaze of former prosperity? Do they not prove themselves shadows, indeed, vanishing with the decrease of the ray, which, falling upon us, cast them into our train? Well; and if they do: one phenomenon seems as inevitable as the other, and cannot be corrected by any prosing sorrow of our's that it is so.

Our three friends set out in Sir Thomas's ample and rather heavy family carriage, and without any mishap arrived on the review ground: it was a large, level field, not far from his residence, and also contiguous to the ancient town of Wexford. The whole military force, which for some time had been assembled, showed, at the first glance, but a very small proportion of regular soldiers. In fact, whether from the imperfect information received by Government, the isolation of the district, or the character for superior industry and intelligence attributed to its inhabitants, nothing like a force sufficient to curb the insurrection, which quickly followed, had yet been sent into the County of Wexford. Now, in January, 1798, only a few months from actual warfare, there was upon the review-field but one troop of regular dragoons, supported by about three hundred militia; while the great remainder of a thousand men, or more, were made up of yeomen horse and foot: an undisciplined, motley, and grotesque body, for whom old Lehamberg's humorous description, in 1688, of his Northern Irish colleagues, might in a degree stand good.

It is our intention to take the reader by the arm, and, in the suite of Sir Thomas Hartley, Eliza, and Sir William Judkin, point out to him the different elements of which the array was composed. And, during our progress, we farther intend to be in good humour, and to smile whenever we meet excitement for our risibility; because, in truth, we are weary of the seriousness of the last chapters, and disposed to relax the muscles of our countenance.

Yet, before we engage in our walk of inspection, we are called upon to notice a certain character, who seems to think himself connected with the interests of our heroine, and accordingly claims our passing regard.

It was a fine afternoon, although one in the icicle month of January; old Winter tried to put on a smile; the sun shone out with a clear, sharp lustre, through an atmosphere of quick-descending frost, which, though itself invisible to the eye, by catching the noontide beam upon each of its myriad atoms, gave much of the sparkling brilliancy peculiar to this kind of day. If the young

heart be free from care, a desire for brisk, laughing exercise is felt in such weather. The air, chastened of the drowsy fog, passes in a free current through the lungs, and the blood is sent freshly through the frame; as the youthful eye glances around, the firmament is a brilliant blue; the earth, having its clinging clod dried up, is pleasant to the foot, and the wish for the bounding walk or the hearty race involuntarily starts into the mind. Had Eliza been at home, near her ash-tree, alone, and unobserved, perhaps she would have given way to such an impulse; even in her present situation, she, tired of the gloomy old carriage, and, at her request, her father, and, it need scarce be added, her lover, descended to walk about the review-field.

As she leaned on Sir Thomas's arm, Sir William, with obsequious bend, partly forward, and partly to one side, assumed his place at her opposite shoulder, anxiously seeking to catch the most slightly whispered opinion; not for the purpose, it is deemed, of questioning its cogency, but that he might assent to it heart and soul, no matter what it proved to be, as "wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best." Such is the tiny tyrant, that, not content to give the heart away, he bestows, along with it, all our faculties and perceptions; so that your true lover becomes a heartless, stupid lad; and yet, strange to say, he is valued for those defects by one who, excepting that she is mortal, is, in all other respects, a divinity—that is, to the sightless eyes of her infatuated "thrall." But his is digression upon digression; and, indeed, we begin to suspect ourselves of a prodigious inclination to gossipping.

A serene frost generally suspends the labour of those employed in cultivating the earth, as can be vouched even by all of our London readers, whose ears have been invaded, about Christmas time, with the startling whoop of "Poor gardeners froze out." But the husbandman, particularly, is made idle by the rigours of a frosty season; and to this circumstance we may partly attribute the presence of a number of peasantry on the review-ground. At the side of the field opposite that upon which the troops appeared in line, they were collected in various groups. And perhaps, even had the weather been auspicious for country work, many amongst them would not have lost this opportunity to witness—under the impression that they might be called to cope with the men before them—a display of military evolution.

Much jeering remark might be heard from them as they descanted on the unsoldier-like appearance of "the Shoneens," or "Johnnys"—a term of derision applied to the lower class of the opposite persuasion, who had been planted, by certain landed proprietors, among the native peasantry, as, in some degree, an antidote to the amazing fructification of Catholicism. Even to the inexperienced eye, the bungling and slovenly attempts at martial appearance of many of these poor men, were quite visible; and the abhorring

peasant would not forfeit an opportunity of allowing some of his hatred to ooze out in humorsome contempt. Mixed with bitter taunt, there might also be overheard a muttered threat, or perhaps a more steady remark upon the best manner of contending with such enemies.

In passing these groups, Sir Thomas Hartley was greeted by cordial salutations of love and good-will. Indeed, notwithstanding his different religion, the Baronet was in reality regarded in no other light than that of one who, at some future day, would be a commander over "the boys," in the expected insurrection.

As our party approached a corner of the field, the most remote from the armed line, they observed a crowd assembled about a particular spot; while a voice, hoarse from over exertion, bellowed out from amongst them—

"It's on the sheet, an' it's on the dice!—Twenty-four is three pound—an' I won't pay you in your paper-rags, either—no, *ma-hurp-an-duoul!*—you moost get it in white an' yellow—Twenty-four is three pound—Thirty is four shillins'—Forty is three tasthers!—Rowl in, here, my sportin' devarthers!—faint heart never won a fair lady!—worse than lose you can't—an,' by the powers, you'll win!—Goold and silver for the ould bits o' brass!—Is there no *spuddoch* wid any o' ye?"

Ere the close of this speech, the crowd immediately encircling the speaker divided, and gave Sir Thomas a partial view of his person. The Baronet was somewhat of a curious student of his fellow-creatures of every class. He felt an impulse to stop a moment and look more closely at the fellow. Eliza pressed his arm; he became alive to his situation, and moved forward. But much farther progress was now a work of some difficulty. Outer circles of peasants had closed round the fashionable party, as well as round others of the same rank, all eager to be spectators, at least until the inspecting general should arrive and the review begin, of the losses, and gains, the hopes and disappointments, of such of their class as might venture to try their fortune "on the sheet." Eliza shrank from a bustle through the increasing crowd more than she had from standing still; she also recollected her father's disposition to be amused with such characters as the rustic gamester, and, at her instance, Sir Thomas and Sir William gave over these endeavours to make way.

A group, composed with but few exceptions of the younger peasantry, encircled a small dial-table, over which bent the agitator of the scene. He was a man of middle age and bulky form. From the tendency of his dark sandy hair and whiskers to assume a greyish cast, and from the appearance of one or two slight furrows in his cheek, he might be about fifty; but his face was ruddy, and, even without the effects of the weather now so visible upon it, must have shown rather a youthful colour. When his full, well-

formed lips rested on each other, they parted forward with an expression of bold self-confidence; and when in motion, always showed a half-suppressed, jeering smile. Occasionally, as he raised his head, his dark hazel eye shot round from face to face with such rapidity, that the person it scrutinized scarcely became aware of the glance which conveyed, fully for all purposes, to the acute observer, his character, or his state of feeling. The complex expression of the man's visage was made up of habitual cunning, a chuckling consciousness of superior sagacity, comprising perhaps contempt for his dupes, and all glossed over by a frank, bullying, good humour.

Industry stamps value upon acquired means, indeed upon acquirement of every kind; but sudden and undesired gains generally seem to be as little regarded by their possessor, as, in his person, by the world at large. Successful knaves often spend as fast as they get; and, amongst the lower classes at least, whatever may be their uniform good fortune, they never even *look* respectable. Their very clothes indicate their unsettled state of self-estimation. In the present instance, our individual rogue was dressed in that style of shifting contrivance which marks his tribe. His coat, originally manufactured at the nation's expense, and first worn by some one of His Majesty's soldiers, had undergone a process, by no means unusual, for adaptation to its present tenant. Its cape had been stripped off, and then it had been dipped into the hatter's vat, whence it emerged boasting a nondescript colour, liable, at a distance, to be called black, but, at a nearer view, showing the primitive underground of dusky red. The fellow's vest was of dappled calf-skin, the hairy side out, and buttoned (let us not suspect why, as, since his day, such a mode of wearing vests has become fashionable) to his chin. Round his neck was loosely tied a tattered silk-handkerchief, stuffed with some uncouth kind of wadding, into the shape—perhaps not unaptly prophetic—of a thick halter; and his rusty hat, much too capacious for its chance wearer, had been prevented from falling over his eyes by a contrivance that, in our opinion, gives a peculiar and finished air of vagabondism to its adopter,—namely, the filling up, with a truss of rags, the superfluous space between the forehead and the inner edge of the beaver.

On the little deal-table before him was a spacious sheet of paper, described at the top, in great red letters—"The New London Sheet Lottery." It was divided into square compartments, each of which contained a number; and beneath every number might be deciphered either a certain sum, by way of prize, or the much more frequently occurring "blank, blank, blank:"—the former printed in red, the latter in mourning black; as if the meaning of the word could not sufficiently distinguish it, or sufficiently distress a loser. In a tin vessel, bulged, battered, and bent, the result of many spi-

rited or despairing knocks against the table, he rattled a set of dice, eight or nine in number, fabricated without any attention to uniformity of size or shape,—one being oblong, another nearly triangular, another inclined to a spherical form, but none exactly square; and so contrived, no doubt, in order to be managed to good advantage by the proprietor, and, in an increase ratio, by occasional amateurs.

As he continued to rattle these dice in their curious tin box, the bold knave still growled forth—(for, as has been mentioned, all clearness of voice was gone, by constant exercise)—"It's on the sheet, an' it's on the dice, I tell ye!—whoo! rowl in! there's the getherin' o' three pounds for the beggerly pinnies! What's the matther wid ye? Tundher-an'-turf! an' tundher-an'-ages!" He gesticulated most extravagantly, and flourished his rattling-box about his head, and then thumped it down, as he went on: "My heavy curse stick to ye all, like wax! is there no courage among ye, at all at all?"

But there seemed to be a stagnation of the gambling disposition among his audience; chiefly owing, perhaps, to the ill-success which, in their own persons, or those of their friends, had attended late speculations. "Hould up, here!" suddenly elevating his shoulders and arms, to get rid of some who pressed upon him; "hould up, ye *beg-avaw** thiefs; is there none o' ye has the *spuddock*, I say agin? Ah! *meenauya!*† my shame be upon ye, every mother's son! A poor man an' a coward, the saints above hates—so they do! Here's the money wrastlin' for the bare life in my pocket below, wantin' to see which o' ye comes out first, an' no one 'ill give id a chance! Take a throw, ould daddy!" lowering his voice, as he suddenly addressed a withered greybeard, and stooped across the table to catch him by the lapel of the coat.

The old fellow gave a smile of denial, that half-pretended to know "a thing better," and half had a silly expression.

"Take a throw, daddy;—I'll call you my daddy, because you're ouldher nor me; an', by the piper! a purty little ould man too! I wish I had such a clane ould daddy, in thrue arnest! Take;—my sowl to glory! but I'm for your good—"

The sire still smiled and shook his head.

"Do—just a throw! you'll win! There's a loocky dhrop stannin' in your eye! Come, your sowl!—You won't? Well, then, take a throw for nothin'."

This proposal was accepted: the old man took up the tin vessel.

"Rattle 'em well!" continued the orator; "thump their heads together, to warm 'em aforehand what you want." While speaking, he contrived to peep into the cannister:—"Down wid 'em, now, my boy!" and he prompted the adventurer's hand to the ac-

* Good for nothing. † A term of contempt.

tion. "That's your sort! that's id!—well done, ould daddy!—now, there's money on the faces iv 'em: wait, a doochey-bit, a-*cuishla*," as the old fellow motioned to examine his venture, and all heads were poked down to witness the luck.

"It's myself won't let ye have id to say bud I gave ye a chance. Is there ever a one to pay for the daddy's throw? there 's the worth o' the money undher the can; will *you* pay for the throw?" abruptly slapping the shoulder of a man with a round, pock-marked face, and large puffy eyes, who, his under-jaw dropped, stood gazing and gaping; and now he started, almost jumped aside, and looked frightened, at the suddenness and briskness with which he was addressed. And "No—a—" he drawled out, "my mother didn't gi' me any laffenas,* comin' to see the sodgers, for fear I'd—

"Go home, out o' this, to your mother, then, or I'll send you ridin' on a *thrawneen* wid the fairies, for a year an' a day."

"Oh—a—musha—a—oh—a—," said the person thus exhorted, as, in real alarm, he slowly withdrew from the cabalistic scene, to meet us, however, at another time and place.

"Hah! hah!" laughed the master of the ceremonies, "I done for that *ownshuck*. Pay for the throw?" now speaking to a smart-looking lad opposite to him.

"You're too great a rogue, Rattlin' Bill; there's neither luck nor grace near the ground you stand on."

"Only it's not the way wid me," retorted Bill, "to be callin' poor people, like you, out o' their names, I'd say *you* were an honest boy. Will nobody pay for the throw? Daddy, be your own friend, pay for id, yourself."

"Didn't you give the throw for nothin' at all?" questioned daddy.

"Och! to be sure I did: an' didn't you take id for the same price?" pushing his jeering face close to that of the querist: "bud, to give the chance o' money for the nothin' that the Connaughtman shot at—that's a horse of another colour, ould daddy. Come, take your own gorçoon's advice, an' pay for the loock;—you won't?—well, remember, I gave the offer."

His oratory availed nothing; but, in the very critical moment of confirmed caution of him and his tin box, a ragged fellow, whose knee rested on a wooden-leg, while the proper member poked out at full length behind, stumped and bustled his way to the table. "Come," he said, assuming the most innocent of guileless smiles, and having shoved up his bulged hat for the purpose, he applied his fingers behind his ear, "come, I'll thry my loock; an' who knows, by dad! but a poor boy that's in the want iv id, 'ud have gain comin' to him; sure, we'll have the good-will o' the neighbours on our side, any way;" and he modestly looked for an assurance into the faces of those around him.

* Halfpence.

"Our good-will is all you'll have for your money," said one.

"By my conscience!" remarked another, "a dhrop o' liquor to warm your heart 'ud be betther for you than the rattlin' o' the cannisther, in regard o' your good threepence."

"There was a loud, assenting laugh. The adventurer looked dubious, holding his pence between his finger and thumb.

"Pitch 'em all to the *dhunnus*," said Rattling Bill, snatching the threepence.

"Give us our money," whined the fellow.

"Not a rap farth'n," answered Bill, pushing the cannister to his hand.

"Well, here goes, at any how," again assuming his innocent smile.

He threw, and won sixpence. Agreeing to take two casts more, in lieu of his prize, he still rattled the dice. His last venture entitled him to four shillings.

"That's wrong!" exclaimed Bill; "a wrong throw, by ——! I won't give into id."

"Och! boys, boys! don't see a poor crature sarved this way: I have bud the one leg, boys!" appealed the man with the wooden member to the lookers-on.

"Pay him his winnins, Bill!" cried a voice.

"Not as mooch as a *keenogue*,"* said Bill.

"You must down wid it!" added many interested voices.

"Gi' me my own, you rogue o' the world," whimpered the cripple.

"It's yoo is the born thief," retorted Bill.

"Come, pay the poor crature his money!" exhorted an athletic lad, frowning ominously on the owner of the dice. The crowd prepared to second him in a mere act of justice.

"Here, ye robbers," at last said Bill, thrusting his hand into his pocket, "ye shan't have it to say that I hung my ears for four shillings,—no, by the piper! nor if they war pounds:—here, you Divil's darlin'!" and he grinned into the face of the winner—"here! an' that your other leg may turn out sthraight afore you, the same as the one behind, just to have you aqu'l at the two sides!"

"By dad!" replied the other, smiling and winking on the crowd, as he turned the money over and over in his hand:—"By dad! them that loses is welcome to be cranky, an' why not, rememberin' the auld sayin', for them that wins? so, we'll say good by to you, *a-vich*, while we're well off." And Rattling Bill's accomplice, with whom, as well as his respectable principal, we are doomed to have much to do, stumped through the throng, nodding and smiling, and exhibiting his very considerable gains.

The bait took. Upon witnessing the indisputable good fortune

* An imaginary coin—half a farthing.

of the wooden-legged hero, many again ventured; but, blank, blank, was the successive recurrence, for every throw.

Eliza had perceived that almost as soon as, to indulge her father's humour rather than her own taste, and indeed to avoid scrambling through the outer mob, she had stopped opposite the gambling-table, the presence of the "gontlefolk" was observed by Rattling Bill! Yet, after the quick glance that gave him his information, the master of the dice seemed unconscious of their proximity: and this appearance he for some time well supported.

But, during some of his most vehement gesticulation or rhodomontade, and while employed in his knavish business, our heroine afterwards caught the man's eyes stealthily fixed on her's, with an expression of maliciousness, joined to its rude familiarity, which rendered it peculiarly disagreeable. As the scene of his triumphant rascality proceeded, his glances, always cautiously and cleverly ventured whenever the eyes of Sir Thomas and Sir William were turned away, became more bold; and Eliza was at length about to urge her father to leave the spot, at any risks, when a new occurrence suspended her intention.

After innumerable repetitions of the doleful word "blank," the crowd, of whom the greater portion had, by this time, been losers, began to wax suspicious and discontented: and one, who, instead of his anticipated prize, nay of his lost threepence, had just heard the hated sound, grew restive. He could not read; but he took it upon himself to affirm, that the number he had last thrown was the same upon which the wooden-legged man arrived at wealth, for the day. Some thought he was right, others knew he was wrong, yet, in revenge for their own losses, gave judgment against Bill. In this dilemma, the baited juggler appealed "to the gintlemen;" now, for the first time, seeming aware of the presence of the two Baronets.

The group immediately round the table turned to ascertain to whom the reference had been made, and recognizing Sir Thomas, they, with much officious deference, opened their circle to admit the arbitrators.

Sir Thomas, smiling to find himself thus appointed by acclamation to dispense "even-handed justice" in so curious a case, stepped to the table. Overstrained condescension was, perhaps, one of the faulty traits in his character, although it caused him to be idolized by the people in his neighbourhood; and, in this view, might be supposed to minister to his pride better than a more lofty and distant demeanour. If at any time reminded of his foible, he showed a degree of ill-temper to which he was, in all other circumstances, a stranger. Eliza, accustomed since childhood to observe her only parent, knew all these facts; and her recollection of the latter would not permit her to draw back, even as her father advanced

more closely towards the person whom she thought there was some reason she should avoid.

"Now hould your clattherin' tongues, ye set o' sprissauns," said Rattling Bill; and Sir Thomas promptly informed the demurring loser, that the number thrown was indeed a blank.

"Well," said the discomfited though now acquiescing lad, "any honest body's word 'ud do wid me, not to talk iv your honour's, in the place o' that kiln-dried rogue fornent you; for, as sure as there is a place below," pointing downward, "a place that we won't call by its name, out o' regard to your honour, an' the young misthress, God bless her! ould Nick 'ill be rattlin' dice in his skull yet, if he doesn't chate the bouchal of his bargain, as he chates the rest o' the world."

"Ay," replied Bill, not so choice of his language, "when he's throwin' for bad sowls on red-hot griddles, wid sinners' burnt killy-bones in the place o' the nath'r'l dice; an' then, if he doesn't win *you*, at the first offer, *nawbocklish**—that's all."

"For one crooked sthraw, I'd send you to him sooner than ye both bargained for!" retorted the vexed loser; and he clenched his cudgel, and looked ferociously at Rattling Bill.

"Be quiet, my good lad," said Sir Thomas Hartley, laying his hand on his arm; "you must not proceed to violence."

"Then he ought to be down on his knees, prayin' for your honour, if he hasn't forgot to do the like; or, by the stick in my hand! I'd put him in a way that wouldn't let him be chatin' the country-boys agin."

The wrathful youth withdrew as he said this, now and then turning his head over his shoulder to look his postponed purpose at the indifferent person he threatened; and then he took up a new position, a little outside the inner circle, chafing and muttering, and, with many idle graspings of his shillelah, repeating for his own satisfaction, what he would do "if his honour wasn't to the fore."

"Come, boys!" resumed Rattling Bill, almost as soon as his last hostile word had been uttered, now assuming a very jovial look and tone; and he was about to proceed with some new matter, when Sir Thomas and his party turned from the table.

"Your honours," he then went on imploringly, "don't go till ye just see this;—your handsome young honour, look here!" addressing Sir William; "maybe, you'd like to thry id yoursef: I'm goin' to ax the poor boys to take a throw that 'ill tell their fort'ns. Come, gorçoons—no charge—the loock in store for some o' ye wouldn't be worth payin' for—I'll tell any boy among ye, the colleen that 'ill be his own yet. Who'll take a throw to know aforehand, the

* Never mind.

plague that'll stick to him all the days iv his life? Will *you?*" holding the divining canister to a stripling near him.

"No," said Sir William, who had turned round in good humour at Bill's personal appeal; "give it to the lad by your side. I know *him*, and should like to judge of your prophetic powers in a case where it is not likely you have prepared the person to prophecy for himself."

"Wid all my heart," readily assented Bill; "here, a-vich, take it—rattle 'em well—now! that's id—" as the lad smote the table—"again to id!"—another throw was given—"Whuop! thry your hand the third hait—third an' last settles it for you."

The third throw accordingly ensued. The knave consulted the dice a moment.

"Now hould your ear, *a-hagu;*" he whispered the youth, who, at his first word, started and first stared upon Bill in fearful amazement, while the conjuror returned his gaze with a leer of self-satisfied cunning. In a few seconds, the lad became aware of the confessing state of feeling he had exhibited, and, making an awkward attempt to dissimulate, blushed to the eyes, as he stammered out —"Bud you're wrong now—you didn't guess id."

"What colour is red?" queried Bill, sinking his head towards him, and using a confidential tone, loud enough, however, for his purposes.

The strippling made no reply, but, blushing again, dropped his chin on his breast, and seemed consulting the toes of his brogues.

"Don't be afeard o' me!" resumed Bill—"keep your sacret, an' it's all between yoursef an' mysef;" and the fidgets, and continued silence of the detected lover, belied his former words, and told that Bill had made a true hit.

"Won't you thry your hand, neighbour?" continued the juggler to another present. The same ceremony was gone through, as much on the part of the adventurer, for the pleasure of rattling the dice in the noisy tin box, and of thumping the table with it, as from any serious calculations on the results. Again, however, Bill whispered this second candidate for knowledge of the future; and,

"Who the duoul tould you that?" questioned the young rustic, in sudden alarm.

"Who tould me? Don't you see id on the dice?"

The lad looked as if a secret of vital importance, which he had believed no one but himself and the powers above and below were aware of, had just been whispered in his ear.

Our party were again retiring.

"Won't your young honour thry your own loock?" asked Bill of Sir William.

"Some other time, perhaps," answered the Baronet good-humouredly.

"But the handsome young lady, won't she?" Eliza bowed her head in cold dissent. Bill briskly wheeled round the table, with the conjuring canister in his hand, and confronted her.

"Just touch your lily hand upon id, an' we'll throw for you, 'twill do as well."

Our heroine looked haughtily offended. Sir Thomas glanced among the peasants, and observing that they seemed gleeishly to expect the condescension, whispered—"Touch it, my love, if only to get rid of the mountebank, and please those poor people."

Thus exhorted, Eliza complied. Bill was at his table again in a moment. Our friends would not wait to witness the result of his divination; but, as they made way through the now yielding crowd, Eliza heard him shake the ill-fashioned bones in the vessel, and then thump it down three times, as in the former cases. She was not moving away from Bill with her back directly turned; and ere they quite lost sight of each other, her eyes involuntarily recurred to the place where he remained. Standing upright over the table, and with one finger resting among the scattered dice, as if he had just summed up their pretended prediction, she found the fellow looking at her more expressively than before. Malignity, she thought, mixed with the bold, personal meaning of his glance; and Eliza felt some terror and much disgust at its expression. Yet, in a fit of fascination, similar to that which causes the lonely boy, in his quaking journey through the midnight dell, to rivet his eye intensely on the bush his fears have shaped into some fearful form, she could not immediately withdraw her gaze from the look that thus agitated her: and, during the few seconds she continued fixed by it, its disagreeable character increased, or Eliza's fancy made her think so.

Having passed the outskirts of the throng, and lost all view of her insolent tormentor, our heroine shook off these sensations, however, and brought herself to consider them as both unbecoming and silly.

CHAPTER VII.

We proceed to perform our engagement of accompanying the reader along the marshal line drawn out for his inspection. Its right was composed of horse. To the extreme right were two troops of heavy dragoons; the remainder were yeoman-cavalry.

The dragoons were able-bodied men, whose bearskin-crowned helmets shaded brows of menace and of daring purpose. Their attention to the exhibition, nay to the exaggeration of person deemed necessary to impress beholders with an idea of prowess, and their minute observance of uniformity of costume, bespoke the soldier by profession. Their well-burnished accoutrements, disposed with fastidious regularity, gave fearful show of readiness for combat. As they sat in their saddles, erect and motionless, it seemed the situation for which they had been created; so much "pride of place," and such grave self-possession did they exhibit. The noble steeds they bestrode, proud to bear such burdens, switched their long, shining tails, or pawed the turf, to express their wish for the clattering career; yet they stirred not from their positions; their strength and power altogether at the disposal of the weaker but reasoning beings who had acquired habitual sway over their slightest will and motion.

Whatever may be the practical value of a well-disciplined column of infantry, the appearance of an armed man, thus mounted on his curveting war-horse, is immeasurably beyond that of the foot-soldier. His proud mastery over his charger, and the picture of both, dashing like one high-souled animal into the roar of battle, give a lofty idea of human power. And influenced, perhaps, by such an idea, the greater number of the yeoman force under our eye were caparisoned as cavalry. But other reasons might have guided the preference. A man who could furnish himself with a battle-horse, was palpably a person of more consideration than the mere pedestrian servant of his country. At a first and inexperienced glance, too, there seemed less of fatigue in military evolutions performed by one's horse, instead of oneself; and, again, if the man of impetuous courage could be borne into the combat with velocity equal to his daring, it may have prudently occurred to other cavaliers, that, on the retreat, the united efforts of man and horse have a manifest superiority over the soldier who can only run away on foot.

The yeomanry corps next to the regular dragoons, was one to

which precedence was yielded, in consequence of its appearance, and of the consideration of those who mostly filled its ranks. They were indeed, generally speaking, men of property, who bore, in their new guise of soldiers, the characteristics of their civil rank in life. The young fellows amongst them had succeeded in convincing their fair friends, whether sisters or mistresses, that the helm sat gallantly on their foreheads; and white palms were often closed together in admiration of their air, as they vaulted into the saddle, or older ladies looked with pleasure and pride through their spectacles, at the manly form now diligently displayed in its new attire, and at the dashing deportment which a change of calling suggested as necessarily in character. As these handsome patriots strutted to the fireside, and fearfully flourished their flashing blades, eyes, of which the beams, like the lightnings of those same polished weapons, were but the harbingers of a death-wound, closed in an appeal of mock terror, to be spared the impending blow; and there is authority for adding that, in many cases, suits which had been but coolly received at an every-day civil pleading, were promptly yielded to the courageous *accolade* of the yeoman.

The post next in honour was occupied by the mounted and armed citizens of Wexford: some, gentlemen of independence, more or less; some, the more respectable traders of the town. The former description of persons rode good serviceable steeds, and not a few amongst them were mounted in gallant show, filled their saddles with habitual ease and confidence, and altogether put on the warrior with much military assumption. Many of the trading folk also boasted sleek horses, and were well accoutred and caparisoned; but contrast and variety might on a closer observation be noticed. Paunches that used to inconvenience the wearers on foot, rested comfortably against the soft bearskin of the holsters. White locks were cumbered with a heavy headpiece, which threw its stern shade over features of much pacific Christian endurance; and "shrunk shanks," that but half filled the heroic boot, rendered a horse necessary to enable the loyal old man to prove his principles in the field. Indeed, such an individual, riding about under the serious fardel of his accoutrements, supported his cause rather by self-infliction for its sake, than by any very effectual work he could be supposed to do amongst its enemies.

Passing this corps, many others may be massed together who were composed of the most respectable of the middle classes of the neighbouring villages, or of the most wealthy among the Protestant gentlemen farmers; and, generally speaking, each was commanded by the chief landed proprietor of a district. And to such corps attached the character of respectable appearance, notwithstanding that, in some instances, little gallantry of attire, or little glitter of weapons or accoutrements, fascinated the eye of a beholder. The casque might press firmly down too, without adorn-

ing the head it defended: and the feather, astray of its proper smart erectness, might droop backward or forward, yet there was a soldierly expression about the men which recommended them to notice. They looked as if they had mounted their serviceable horses for something beyond the purposes of display. If they sat ungracefully in their saddles, one could judge they would hold their places firmly; and that the rust of the scabbard would not hinder from smiting bitterly the blade it preserved for no holiday purpose.

The majority of inferior country corps, raised among the very lowest orders, by some obscure zealot, whose new title of captain was his first earthly dignity, looked as if they had pushed this feeling into fierce or stern excess. In fact, along with the untrained state of passion incidental to their general habits, they brought into the field the darkest religious prejudice—the darkest, we say, for they could not enlighten themselves, much less others, with an account of why they hated; perhaps, not even with "an account of the faith that was in them;" antipathy to the prevailing creed of the country often forming the greater portion of their own.

And in military outfit they were as imperfect and as shabby as in mental order. Uncombed locks strayed, along with glances not of the gentlest expression, from beneath the peak of the helm; their jackets were soot-stained, their uncleansed and smoke-dried boots crippled up knees unused to such control—indeed, in some instances, worsted hose was the only defence the leg could boast; and very often a single rusty spur served the unbooted cavalier, who, however, might vindicate his omission of the other, upon the principle of a certain well-reasoning poet, according to whom, if one side of a horse be compelled to travel, its fellow will not lag behind. And their untrained, shaggy steeds stood under them, spiritless and inert, drowsily enjoying, with closed eyes and necks poked downward, the "stand at ease," allowed before the arrival of the general. Not a whit puffed up did they seem at the new and ennobling service they were called to fill: not a whit transformed, in spirited imaginings, into warring chargers, merely because a very rusty scabbard chafed against their ribs.

Our inspection of the infantry now commences. The military heading its line were only part of a regiment quartered in the county; they were attended, however, by a band of music.

Many will recollect that, at the time we treat of, the dressing of a soldier's head, for parade or review, was the business of a morning. Powder and pomatum should have been the ingredients used at his toilet, but the private's scanty pay obliged him to substitute flour and soap; and a compost of these matters having been abundantly mixed with the hair, he combed his locks at either side into two goodly *chevaux-de-frize*, leaving at top a *téte-toupée;* the whole much resembling, in miniature, a fortress on a hill, defended by lower outworks. But this was not all. The soldier of battalion

farther wore, half-way down his back, a queu, a tail long enough for many among the monkey tribe; and the grenadier displayed, between his brawny shoulders, an iron-bound packing-box, containing, or supposed to contain, hair, of the polishing and adjusting of which he was bound to be as careful as of his more valuable accoutrements. There was some sense, though of a tardy growth, in the order that dispensed with these curious appendages to manhood and soldiership; and at the time of its promulgation, a punster did not lose the opportunity of observing that, in any future affray, the soldiers of his Britannic Majesty could never again "turn tail."

Upon the review-field our militia marched into line without a hair awry. Their casques, half-way between the succeeding cap and the horseman's helm, sat precisely above the *chevaux-de-frize*. In all other respects, too, they showed like soldiers of that day. Coats, belts, pouches, white small-clothes, and tight black leggings, glittering with buttons, were spruce and debonnair. The sun flashed from the polished barrels of their muskets; the prim feathers stood perpendicularly in their caps; their chins rested easily on their stocks.

But we cannot yield to these men more praise than that excited by their outward show of discipline. In habits and conduct, as soldiers, they had been debauched, and were a part of the force previously described by Abercrombie as "licentious and disorderly."

Called to conflict, soon after they were embodied, not against equal foes, from whom the danger to be expected in attack renders necessary a systematized courage, but against nightly insurrectionists, who fled from regular contests, and who were to be put down by piecemeal vengeance, they had acquired, perhaps irresistibly, notions of military service destructive of discipline. In the particular instance before us, sectarian hatred gave energy to this half-bandit feeling of duty; and in the name of God, as well as in the name of the King, cabins were rased, and, sometimes, the unresisting peasant met the fate of a resisting one, without much danger incurred, on the part of the slayer, of being called to account for the accident.

As the yeoman cavalry of Wexford took the post of honour near to the regular dragoons, so the yeoman infantry of that town stood next to the militia.

It has before been hinted, that many soldiers from the town of Wexford allowed themselves to be enrolled for his Majesty's service, rather to give a proof of their loyalty, of which readiness to take up arms was the test, than on account of any great liking they felt for the new profession, or indeed any fitness they displayed for the hot struggle of the battle-field: our former remark will hold particularly good for the corps now passing under inspection. We

remember one, at least, amongst them, who bore his musket strictly in this sense, and in this only;—that is, he was content to give the demonstration of principles required by putting on a red coat, and endeavouring to learn, late in life as it was to begin, the theory of a soldier's trade; but of any step beyond this, he never entertained a notion. He attended drill as punctually as he opened his shop; but when his corps was sent to shoot at a target—a memorable one, which had served for a whole month's practice, and was but little injured at the end of the campaign,—he never cared to put ball-cartridge into his piece, nor could exhortation or threat compel him to do so. "Me!" he cried—"is it me?—not I, upon my word and credit; how do I know but I might hurt some one?"

And another occurs to our recollection, who, after he had feelingly bidden his children adieu, would issue forth to the day's duty, with a face of studied quietness that seemed to say to all beholders, "although I carry this musket, let no man fear injury from me."

Yet, we should admit that the front rank of this corps boasted a majority of well-dressed, well-looking soldiers, who did much credit to their native town, although serving as a screen to a number of uncouth figures in the rear; men, such as we have sketched, with so much of themselves in advance, that, at the word "close order," when they imagined they took up only one pace of ground, their covering files were pushed out of line; and other feeble wights, who literally tottered under their muskets, and took but little pride, and derived but little enjoyment from the vain pageantry in which they were compelled to bear a part.

The corps we will next pause to notice, was also from the county town, but of inferior caste to the former honourable company, being composed of working mechanics, or persons not of trade or business, who held with them the same social rank. The first-mentioned brought into the field the several characteristic marks of their several occupations, by which, in civil attire, they might easily be distinguished from each other. The butcher handed his musket as if it had been a cleaver; the carpenter, as if it had been a saw; the blacksmith, as if it had been a sledge; the barber's muscular calves betrayed him; the pale, hard-worked, and melancholy visage of the weaver was not to be mistaken; and no previous drilling of a Sunday, in the church-yard, by their serjeant, who was parish-clerk, (with the organist for lieutenant, and the lawyer for captain,) could invigorate the loose-kneed tailor, or give alertness to the nailor's swollen extremities.

In closing our walk of inspection with a few general glances at the whole yeomanry force, it may be said that, in very many other instances, men looked or dressed themselves exactly in keeping with their original civil characters. The snug and sober small farmer donned his cap, distinguished rather than adorned by the

waving feather, in the same fashion that he used to wear his domestic hat, and which caused his ears to protrude like tiny wings, while it covered his neck behind. He contrived, too, to put on his military coat in the identical way he had, for twenty or thirty years, put on his loose frieze suit; and, while plodding to the field, his pouch thumped stoutly behind him, as if it had been a pair of saddle-bags, and his musket lolled over his shoulder like a flail. He still retained, too, the air of homely seriousness, that, in less perilous times, he constantly exhibited when, of a harvest morning, he eyed the firmament to seek early prognostics of the weather.

Nor did the parish-clerk, a character often occurring in the yeomanry ranks, lose the chilly mien of decency which piety and an empty church had long inflicted upon him: nor the parish schoolmaster his pedagogue severity of brow, now so useless where he was himself a pupil, and not an apt one either; nor the petty shopkeeper his sidelong or downward look of calculation, by which, at its first assumption, he would fain have it concluded he was a man who could buy and sell at proper seasons.

Our next parting glance recognises the fact that the yeoman cavalry, along with being the most numerous of the half-volunteer force, made, on the whole, a much better figure than their infantry fellow-soldiers:—it should however be added, that upon the day of real service, which soon followed, they were found of little use, and suffered the mortification of being eclipsed, to a certain degree, by the men whom they now outshine. Indeed, if any of the yeomanry of Ireland could lay claim, in the subsequent contest, to a sprig of laurel, it was earned exclusively by the shabbiest and most unwashed of the foot-companies that have passed under our eye; by men whose old corderoy or frieze small-clothes, clumsy worsted stockings, and broken foot-gear, denied them, from the waist downwards, all seeming right to the name of soldiers. Nay, a leaf of the above-mentioned sprig may be awarded to corps called Supplementary, (we were ashamed to notice them before,) whose only outward pretensions to that high-sounding title came from their having dingy cross-belts huddled over their smeared working attire, and dusty muskets on their shoulders. But hereditary prejudices fitted such men better than fine clothes could have done, for the unhappy cause which called them out of their obsure abodes of rancorous ignorance, to deal life or death throughout the land: and although, upon this review day, they clutched their weapons awkwardly, a close observer might predict that, under less formal circumstances, they were persons who would ram the cartridge home, pull the trigger with unshaken nerve, and blanch not at the sight of blood, whether shed in the battle-field, or at the lonely roadside.

CHAPTER VIII.

"A flourish, trumpets! beat, alarum drums!"

The veteran general has at length arrived, and, in obedience to some such command as is contained in our quotation, his welcome is sounded on the brazen trumps of the dragoons to the right, and by an imposing burst of martial music from the band at the head of the militia infantry. "Attention!" echoes, in tones of high command, from one officer to another along the line; and no voices shout the word louder than those of the yeoman captains. All put on their best appearance for the first glance of the general's eye; and if there be some jostling and confusion among certain corps, and some under-breath growls against them by the drilling officers, let us not be hypercritical, but rather admit that all managed as well they could. Even the old commander, while he looked with an eye of steady, frowning scrutiny on the regular troops, smiled indulgently on the essay of the others: we fear, indeed, the smile occasionally amounted to the more palpable expression of merriment, while some individuals caught his notice.

He had ended his observation of the line, and assumed his place in its front, when Sir Thomas Hartley thought there was a good opportunity to address the general on the subject which had brought him to witness the military exhibition.

The Baronet's salutation was politely received, and his complaint attentively listened to: and as he portrayed the acts of aggression for which he sought reasonable redress, the veteran glanced sternly towards that part of the line against which the facts were stated.

"Order Major ——, of the — Dragoons to advance," he said, abruptly turning to his aid-du-camp; and while the officer galloped across the field to obey the command, he addressed Sir Thomas Hartley.

"I have heard, Sir, upon my route, but too many circumstances like those you relate:—I am sorry to say, my ears are sickened with them!—A complaint is preferred against your troop, Sir," speaking to the Major of Dragoons, who had now come up—"a complaint which I am very sorry to hear."

"I am ignorant, General, of any censure which can rest upon my people; they are loyal subjects, and brave soldiers in His Majesty's cause."

"And yet," said Sir Thomas Hartley, "Major —— will be good enough to recollect, that I have already submitted, for his consideration, more than one charge against them, little creditable to soldiers,—which, however, he did not choose to examine."

"Sir Thomas Hartley alludes to some very trivial matters," replied the officer;—"accidents happening when the King's troops had to deal with disguised rebels—as all the fellows hereabout are known to be."

"Sir," returned the old General warmly, "I can no more assent to the justice of your summary mode of argument, than I can countenance the proceedings it would defend. A man's claims to bravery become doubtful when he acts tyrannically, or when he lavishes his force without dreading retaliation. Your men, Sir, will not mature their valour in such a school; and I am ashamed that soldiers should so nearly act the parts of banditti, as to terrify, by the bravado of weapons, the passive and defenceless. Such conduct, Sir, has a manifest tendency still more to alienate the people from us, and from the King, and cause we serve; and if it is not a palliation for defection, a single friend can, assuredly, never be gained by it. Attend me at my quarters, Major ——, after the inspection; and you, Sir Thomas Hartley, will also favour me with your company; when, so far as is possible, amid this general want of discipline, I will see justice done to your tenants."

He bowed his head, as a signal for terminating the interview. The major slowly rode back to his troop, but not before he had fixed an expressive look on his accuser; and Sir Thomas, returning his stare, joined our heroine and her lover.

The Baronet had scarcely again disposed himself to attend to the progress of the review, when his interest, and that of Eliza and Sir William, and, obviously of the General, was engaged by the approach, to the latter, of a strange horseman. He seemed a person advanced in years, tall, gaunt, his head partially covered with a black hunting-cap, his coat, like that of a dragoon soldier, but much tattered, as also were his soiled leather small-clothes, and his jack-boots.

By some chance, his spurs had erred from his heels midway up his leg, but with them, even in such a situation, he continually gored the sides of a stout horse, on which he was mounted, and which he pushed straightforward toward the general, as if about to tilt with him; not that he held his saddle, indeed, with the erect vigour of a knight of yore; on the contrary, at every plunge of his steed, he shook from side to side, like one about to fall,—contriving, however, still to avoid the ground, with the pertinacious instinct of one accustomed to every predicament of horsemanship.

As the general looked on in amazement at his furious career, and as our friends expected to see it end in a sudden shock between them, the knight, arrived at speaking distance, suddenly threw

himself back in his saddle, pulling at the reins with all his strength, while his long legs pushed forward nearly to a level with the horse's neck; and by this masterly movement the animal became so instantaneously and vigorously checked, that he almost fell back on his haunches. His master, too, all but tumbled over the crupper; then, with something of the reaction of an overstrained bow, came forward again thump against the pummel; then assumed a tolerably upright position; and finally pulled off, in flourishing soldierly style, his huntsman's cap, and looking as if confusedly full of some momentous matter, began, out of breath, an effort at articulation. But his tongue did not promptly act its usual part,—two or three words only escaped, much thickened, and after having suffered much elision; and it became visible that he was in that delicious state which transforms the beggar into as great a personage as the king.

"Plaise—your—honour—" he stuttered.

"Well, Sir?" questioned the General.

The cavalier paused, drew in his breath with a long wheezing gasp, expelled it in as long a groan, gulped it down again, and at last said, still very disjointedly—

"Plaise your honour, won't you ixcuse the poor Bally-bree-hoone cavalry?"

"State your business more clearly, Sir," answered the General, puzzled, after returning one of his many salutes, to understand his meaning.

"The poor Bally-bree-hoone cavalry," continued the courier; "they'd come, an' they'd be here;" still waving his cap, as once more he wavered from side to side; "an' they'd take up their ground the first o' the field, an' they'd show a patthern 'ud take the light from your eye,—Gineral,—not like them garron-killers, beyant;—an' they'd charge! ay, in stylo!"—and he darted spurs into his horse, and pushed him forward until his nose and that of the animal ridden by the General came in contact, at which the old commander reined back—"Yes, by the great Saizor!" (Cæsar) —"to the right, wheel! to the left, wheel!" and he tugged his steed so rapidly through what he deemed the evolutions answering to these commands, that the animal seemed chasing his own tail;—and, this done, the knight recurred to his petition;—"won't your honour, i' you plaise, an' I'll be much obliged to you, ixcuse the poor Bally-bree-hoone cavalry?"

"Certainly," said the General; "now that I comprehend you, Sir, I am quite willing to excuse the Bally—— what do you call them?"

"The poor Bally-bree-hoone cavalry, General; an' you don't know the rasons: the clothin' didn't come—oh! my heavy curse on them tailorin' thiefs! Flog 'em, General; flog 'em wid their own needles, welded together into a cat-o'-nine-tails."

"Your business is ended, I think, Sir."

"Och! my poor Bally-bree-hoone boys! will they stand ixcused, your honour?"

"They do, Sir—they do."

The intercessor made a profound bow over his horse's neck, put on his cap, filed off, pulled up half-way across the ground, and returned at a renewed charge, only to prefer his old request.

"Force that man back," said the General to an attendant dragoon. The command was instantly obeyed. The dragoon's sword flourished terrifically round his head, and its flat often visited his shoulders ere he could be brought to comply with the orders issued with regard to him. Again he forgot that his corps had been "ixcused," and could only think of asking the dragoon to intercede for him and them with the General; and, still bewailing to himself the hard fate of the Bally-bree-hoone cavalry, the man at last left him at a side of the field, where he was shortly surrounded by a crowd of mischief-loving boys from the town of Wexford, who, after listening with mock gravity to his accusations against the tailors, contrived a series of torments for him. One pulled a leg, another its fellow; another twitched his skirt till he thought it was torn off; until, at length, he charged amongst them, crying out—"Quit, ye sons o' thiefs! or, by the great Saizor, I'll gallop over ye!" Scarcely did he succeed, however, in scattering his urchin foes, ere they again cautiously approached to renew the contest.

Meanwhile, much bustle went on along the line. The word was given for forming into subdivisions, and roared successively by each commander to his men. Before the better description of yeoman-cavalry horses could be constrained to form properly, much capering and prancing, and frequent assaults upon each other, ensued between them. Among the inferior classes of animals, hard tugging with one side of the bridle, and many sore inflictions of the rusty spur, were found necessary to force them, in any kind of regularity, into their positions; and in some cases, which came under our own eye, a downright refusal on the part of the lazy beasts, put their crest-fallen masters *hors-de-combat*.

The yeoman-infantry, though having to manage only their own legs, exhibited just as sad a state of confusion. We saw a man, not even as self-possessed as tipsy Cassio, mistake his right for his left, and when he supposed himself whirling into line, come thump against his neighbour; and then he insisted that right was not wrong, and, their noses poked into each other's faces, the comrades exchanged a curse or two before the mistake was corrected.

The business now to be done was that of taking a circuit of the field, and marching by the general, who kept his position about

equi-distant from its either end, and contiguous to a fence that opposed the line.

The dragoons came proudly forward, their horses tossing their heads, glaring war from beneath their frowning brows, champing the bit in impatience of its restraint, and scattering in snowy patches over their chests the froth produced by the motion. The men looked haughtily conscious of their own appearance and of the power it implied, and, perhaps, were not unforgetful of the contrast, so much to their advantage, between them and their less regular brethren.

The principal cavalry corps pranced next, making a showy figure indeed; but the whole attention of the riders was concentrated in a continual effort to curb the metal of their holiday steeds and keep them in something of an orderly pace. The others followed as well as they could; some gravely going the prescribed round as a matter of business, some as a matter of necessity, to be performed to the utmost of their power, and some as a penance full of inflictions. Among the rustic portion of the force, many animals proceeded in the only pace they knew,—excepting, indeed, their snail-like walk under the plough; the movement alluded to being accomplished by slinging one side forward, and then, leisurely and soberly, slinging the other after it: and their riders seemed to regard this as a very good pace to go to battle in, and jogged on quite comfortably and smoothly, under, or rather over, a shaking that would have forced more fashionable horsemen to breathe hard at every jolt, with some anticipations of the state of the spine next morning.

The militia infantry went through the ordeal as became men who had made military evolution their business; and we profess that their appearance and bearing gave us much pleasure. The wealthy town-infantry, next coming up, showed a good front-rank; but, as before noticed, this was only a screen to the greater portion of its rear, who, stumbling or tottering, perspired and groaned through their fatiguing march.

Behind the corps, his person erect as a poplar, and his legs pacing with mathematical precision, as he gave the exact "seventy steps for a minute," came its dreaded permanent sergeant, "un brave," who had seen much service, and borne the reputation of being the neatest soldier and best disciplinarian of his company. Loudly did he stamp against the hard, frozen sod, repeating in that kind of under-tone which will be distinct amid a shouting crowd. "right, left; right, left;" and this for the purpose of keeping his pupils upon their show day, or rather his pupils' feet, in concord and unison. But he often interrupted himself with exclamations. such as the following speech will exemplify:—

"Right, left; right, left; I say, Mr. Sanfey,—'nations, Sir, why don't you mind?—right, left; right, left;—Mr. Gorman, I wish.

from my heart, your legs were in hospital: right, left;—I say, do you hear, Mr. Callahan?—body square to front—spring from haunch—stretch ham—and point toe, Sir;—right, left—will you, I say, Sir—d—n it! will you?—Mr. Jenkins, front-rank man, are you about to ground arms, Sir? Butt to front groin, Sir—lock turned out, arm tight under cock, Sir—*under*, I say, not *over*, d—n it! —right, left."

The captain of this remarkable corps was a man of goodly bulk, looking, at a first glance, fierce and formidable; but, under a close inspection, the knitting of his brows, the staring and rolling of his eyes, and the severe confusion of his lips, might hint inward fretfulness at the labour he was undergoing, joined with mortal fears of not being able to acquit himself creditably.

His sash had been unskilfully tied by some over tender hand, so as to save painful pressure to that precise circle of his prominence where the circumference was greatest, and below which was a very quick descent of diminished rotundity. The rapidity of his march unfortunately loosened from its resting-place the silken badge of his rank, and first gradually, and at last precipitously, it fell down the descent. He had come to the general, at the head of his men; he had just called out "Present arms!" his corps were obeying the words with unusual felicity of movement; he was putting his hand to the peak of his cap, and carrying his sword to the salute—when suddenly the sash dropped to his heels, and at the next step he fell headlong upon the earth.

"As you were, Captain," cried a jocose member of his corps, using the term addressed to recruits, when it is intended to make them repeat a movement, in which, half way, they have failed. With much exertion, and some assistance, the commander recovered his literal *faux-pas;* but considerable confusion resulted from it. Those behind him, ignorant of the occurrence, pressed too closely on each other; and those in advance of their prostrate captain marched a considerable distance beyond their comrades.

These demurs were observed by the curious cavalier who had lately accosted the general in apology for the absence of his men, and who had since remained pretty nearly where the dragoon had placed him, alternately charging the tormenting boys, and, in the pauses of the contest, bitterly bewailing the absence of the Ballybreehone cavalry; who, if they could only have got "the clothin'," in time, from those villanous tailors, would, he was confident, have taken the right of the field that day, and ashamed every corps he cast his eye upon.

When the accident just described became obvious to him—"Oh, murther!" he exclaimed, "what sodgers! look at 'em, now! Wher's the Gineral, or what is he doin'?" and he deviated from his soliloquy, by roaring out, at the top of his lungs—"Halt!" and there was a general halt in consequence.

"What is the meaning of this?" inquired the bewildered commander. His attention was directed to the person who had usurped his privilege, and who now appeared galloping towards the advance of the force, waving his whip, and spurring his steed till the blood streamed down the poor animal's sides. Orders were given to secure his person, and two dragoons accordingly tilted in full gallop, too, against him; but, ere the parties met, he had reined up, faced the town corps, and, seeing he had in his first orders been so punctually obeyed, proceeded to issue additional commands; so that little violence was necessary to place him under arrest.

"Advance, division! hould fast, there!" he began; when the flat of a sword, now a second time applied to his shoulders, gave him to understand he was not the person he supposed himself to be; and farther discipline, together with a short explanation, convinced him he must relinquish his authority, and consider himself a prisoner, in the name of the general. As one who had a high notion of discipline, he bowed with grave submission to his important fate, and allowed himself to be quietly led back to the fence, where, until farther orders, the dragoons guarded him, one at either side.

We would now represent the line as again formed, and the word given to fire. There was a greater variety in the discharge than is practised by more habitual professors of noise and fume. Some precipitately pulled the trigger the instant the musket came to the shoulder, and others, either tardy from apprehension, or perhaps not at once able to distinguish the guard from the important little matter it inclosed, tugged stoutly at good steel that had not been intended to yield to a touch, and were therefore too late with their contributary shot; and some who had missed fire at the first attempt, cocked, and tried again, careless about uniformity, so that the discharge was valiantly got over; and many near them, who were slow at priming and loading, fired singly, or did not fire at all. And all this time there was fantastic commotion among the horsemen to the right of the infantry; the spirited but untrained steeds jostled, intermingled, plunged, kicked, and sometimes bit each other; strong cart and plough-horses backed, or burst forward beyond all control; though the poor sorry "garrons," who bore the persons of the shabbiest of the cavalry force, showed them a better example; for, not boasting even as much stamina as could be terror-stricken, they only shook their heads and stumps rather vehemently, to express their dislike of the noise.

But the wealthiest of our Wexford corps were fated to suffer most in the campaign of this eventful day.

One of the front-rank—even of the front-rank—was a prosperous man in trade, who, had his character for loyalty stood no chance of being impeached, would never have ventured to meddle with

weapon, dreadful to him almost from his cradle. At a very early age, indeed, a loaded blunderbuss accidentally lay in his way, and, without knowing what it was, he played with it till the infernal engine exploded, jumping out of his infant hands, and, with its butt, spinning him about the floor. Since that day he had shuddered at the sight of any instrument of its kindred. The panic never left him. But times arrived, in which he must either try to chase it out of his heart, or run the chance of being selected, by the keen eye of some informer, as a fit subject, already suspected, for a drum-head court martial, and suspension by the neck, a few minutes after, from the lamp-iron opposite to his own door. With many struggles, he therefore chose the least of the two evils, and became a yeoman.

During the terrors of the volley, this gentleman, thinking it sufficient that one of his senses should be outraged, kept his eyes closely shut while he "let off." The touch-hole of his musket had remained clogged since the apprentice, as part of his general work, last undertook to clean the weapon; it did not, therefore, explode, though in his agitation he thought it did. A second volley came on; he rammed a second cartridge over the first, and a second time falsely imagined he had with much impetuosity discharged his shot. A third volley was ordered—the third cartridge had been manfully added—and, congratulating himself on the success which had attended two fearful experiments, he once more dragged back the trigger. The whole contents of his piece now ignited at once, and, with a force that might make a castle totter, the musket recoiled against his neck, and then bounded from his grasp; he staggered from side to side, displacing his comrades at every movement, and finally fell backward with sufficient impetus to prostrate, along with himself, his rear-rank man.

This was surely enough; and yet more injury was preparing for him. The *ci-devant* commander of the field, and sergeant of the Ballybreehoone cavalry, still kept in durance at the opposite fence, did not escape, notwithstanding the frowning presence of his dragoon-guardsmen, the persecution of the hardy imps, who had marked him as, at all hazards, fair game for the day. His horse's crupper was sufficiently near the fence, in his rear, to allow them to execute a new and deep-laid plan of annoyance. A bunch of furze was provided: two of them crept up the fence from an outer field; when one cautiously, but firmly, had tied it to the animal's tail; the other suddenly let the overstrained tail flap down; and the poor horse, who had no right to suffer for his master, as suddenly darted forward, terrified beyond self-control, and certainly beyond the control of the rider. So unexpected and furious was his first plunge, that he gained many yards in advance before even the dragoons spurred to chase him; and, right ahead did he sweep, his prickly annoyance still dangling behind, and increasing at every

bound his fright and fury; right ahead, and straight across the field, to the first Wexford yeoman-infantry; in through the gap left in their front by the recent mishap; until, in trying to clear the prostrate Mr. Jenkins, one of the animal's hoofs struck his breast, just as he was recovering from his first fall, and caused him a second and more dangerous overthrow. The pursuing dragoons avoiding, from a sense of humanity as well as of discipline, to charge after their fugitive through rank and file, now galloped along the line to its nearest end, in order, after clearing it, to recapture the prisoner. But this gave him an advantage in time, of which, now beginning to calculate his horse's unrestrainable speed in application to his own interests, he did not want tack to avail himself. Directing with spur and rein the still tortured animal to the lowest part of the fence, close behind the military line, one bound brought them both on the road towards home. The dragoons, aware that it had only been wished to keep him quiet in the field, saw no harm in letting him take his own way out of it; and the enfranchised trooper might be seen, for the very short time he remained within view, over the hedges, waving his black cap in exultation; for, though ignorant of the cause of his own mad speed, he took credit to himself for the brilliancy of his achievement; while those who were the promoters of his liberty and happiness, shouted in glee and admiration of the result of a prank meant for his discomfiture.

It was soon ascertained that the fallen soldier had sustained serious injury. He was unable to rise; and some, who had amused themselves with his first upset, assisted to bear him across the field, out of farther danger.

They deposited their burden near to the spot occupied by our party. Sir Thomas Hartley recognized, in the almost senseless campaigner, one with whom he had often dealt, and whose integrity he held in high esteem. Without such a recommendation, indeed, his nature would have urged him to lend assistance; yet the discovery quickened his zeal. He unclasped the choking stock, and was about consulting the state of the pulse, when a hoarse voice, not unfamiliar to the ears of him, or of Eliza, growled out, near them—

"Bleed the crature—bleed him; or King George will have the loss of a bould sodger."

Eliza quickly recognized the proprietor of the gambling establishment, who, at their first coming into the field, had interested her father. Rattling Bill, nodding at Sir Thomas with the familiarity of an old acquaintance, continued in his jocular mood—

"Tundher-an'-turf, your honour! dhraw the red puddle from his heart, or, by the piper, it 'ill put the rattles in his wizen."

"I believe you are right, my good fellow," replied Sir Thomas; "but where is the surgeon to perform the operation?"

"Near at hand, maybe," replied Bill; "just let myself at him—an', by our own sweet conscience! if we don't let it out through his arm, or through the spot next his heart—if such was for his good—why, let him call me a botch iv a bleedher, the next offer."

While Eliza walked away a few paces with Sir William, the conjuror thrust his hand into his pocket, and pulled up from among the dice, which were heard to rattle as he felt for it, a rusty lancet.

And—"Hah!"—he laughed, beginning to brighten it, in some fashion, by moistening it with his breath, and then rubbing it with the skirt of his old soldier's coat—"hah!—can I do id for him? Is there a handle to my face?"

Sir Thomas, reminded by these words of some risk to be run, said, "Have a care, my good fellow, that you understand this matter."

"I'll biggin wid your honour, if it's a thing that you have the laste fear o' me," answered Bill; "an', if I don't send your honour's good wine spoutin' half-way across the field, widout hurt or harum to you, I'll ate this sick sodger's wicked goon, jest to hindher him from killin' himself wid it once agin."

Sir Thomas, assured by the fellow's easy confidence, and also reflecting that by such persons the esteemed process of "bleeding" was at due seasons undertaken all over the country, often very uselessly, but always harmlessly, consented to employ him. And Rattling Bill, ordering one person to do one thing, and another to assist him, in a specified way, as if he had been the most regular and popular practitioner, evinced, by the manner in which he operated, that the business was no ways novel to him. He bandaged the arm, felt for the vein, and duly made his incision, if not very tenderly, at least very effectually. At first, indeed, the relieving stream came but slowly; but by skilful excitements of friction, it soon had vent.

"Look at that, now, your honour, wid both your eyes!" he boastfully exclaimed; then sinking his voice into a whisper, as he bent his head to a frieze-mantled Milesian—"the raal Protestan' dhrop, by the piper!—as black as ink."

At the proper instant he staunched the hemorrhage, as a licensed surgeon would say, though the present operator called it "pluggin' the leak."

"An' now," he went on, "this soft-fleshed poor creature might as well have no shanks to his body, when they're not able to hauld him up; an' for the same rason, he must be lifted an' carried wherever he has to go; an' I'm sure your honour 'ill stand to me for my fee, now that the job is done in style-o."

"You have certainly got through your operation very well, doctor: here is your fee; and, as you say, the gentleman must instantly be helped to my carriage, in which I will convey him to his own door, in the town of Wexford."

"Whoo! I pray that your honour may wondher at the loock you'll have," replied Bill, putting up the money, "an' that the time is commin' when you'll be kilt yoursef, just to let me cure your honour: an' so we have only to lend a hand to this murtherin' sodger, that 'ud win a battle by himsef, havin' no one to help him—an', divil thank him, when he'd shoot off four or five bullets at a time. Och! presarve us from such slaughterin' *roolachs!* Here, you sir," addressing a looker-on, "did you ever play 'Carry-my-lady-to-Lunnon?'—hands across, here—quit, you *bosthoon!*—that's not the way!—ay, now you have id—come, now, you terrible yeoman."

The wounded hero, placed on the seat formed by the crossed hands of Bill and his obedient assistant, and his languid arms thrown over the necks of both, was borne to Sir Thomas's carriage; Bill jaunting him along to humour a silly verse he sang out—one of those used to lull Irish children asleep, and which, for its purpose, has a soothing, soporific air; it ran thus:—

"We will go,
Says the crow,
To Shaun-a-Gow's garden,
An' we will ate
A gosh o' whate
In Shaun-a-Gow's garden," &c.

Sir Thomas Hartley and Sir William Judkin got into the carriage with the wounded man, for the purpose of properly placing him, before Eliza should ascend the step; and while she stood near the door, awaiting their reappearance, Rattling Bill, suddenly changing his manner, and taking the leaf of his hat between his finger and thumb, sidled close to her, and in a lower growl than she had before heard him use, said,

"We thried your loock on the dice, Miss; an', when wather doesn't run, an' grass doesn't grow, you'll be the lady of the brave gintleman that walks by your side; but not till then."

There was a keen earnestness, and a look of triumphant cleverness about the fellow as he spoke this; and before Eliza could sufficiently recover from the effect of his strange words and his manner of address, he had hurried off.

We have admitted that our heroine had some faults. In the same spirit of candour, we point out an additional one. Perhaps, naturally, her mind took interest and even pleasure in the marvellous. By that process which enfeebles so many intellects, namely, the stories of her nurse, whispered, with a frightful murmuring, into her childish ear, the propensity had been wrought up to a terror of omens, and of every thing seemingly supernatural. To balance the defect, Nature had given her a strong and clear understanding, and happy fortune a good mother, who, early aware of her weak-

ness, appealed to it to curb the dangerous bias. Eliza was brought to examine into the cause of the nightly sound that had alarmed her, or to scrutinize closely the form that twilight had shaped most fearfully. The result of this salutary system was as gratifying as, considering the force of her infantine prepossessions, could perhaps have been expected. A habit of reflection was ever at hand, to chase away any sudden appeal to her supernatural fancies. And yet such fancies would start up, even at the most absurd provocation; she detected herself looking with earnestness at the winding-sheet on the taper, or starting at the long midnight-howl of the house-dog. In fact, until reason and intellect could find time to drive away the delusion, she continued, to this day, liable to be agitated by any occurrence apparently out of the natural course of things.

Hence, upon at last taking her seat in the carriage, Eliza was fluttered a little at the prophecy of the mountebank conjuror. But, as usual, a few minutes' reflection enabled her to contemn the impudent knave, and to smile at her own credulity. "He but seeks to terrify me," said Eliza, "by an unfavourable prognostic, out of a *douceur* ample enough to make him consult his fiend again, and come back with a favourable one."

She would at once and completely dismiss the paltry occurrence from her mind. But at the very instant she formed this rational determination, the stern figure and pale visage of Belinda St. John, in the act of uttering a similar augury, started up to her imagination, and Eliza again suffered a temporary return of her supernatural fit. It was strange, at least, that two persons, totally unconnected, and unknown to each other, should successively agree in warning her of an unhappy termination of her love; and while Eliza only said it was strange, she felt the coincidence to contain a vague something more.

Again she was successful, however, in bridling her tendency to the ominous: after a short but vigorous exercise of her understanding, the ravings of Belinda went as cheap as the designing knavery of Rattling Bill; yet, though a second time tranquil, the little struggle of Eliza's feelings left her saddened, and inclined to anticipate, from other causes than the influence of the stars, misfortune to her lover and herself. As Sir William kept up with her father an animated conversation upon the events of the day, his fine face still turning, however, like the sunflower, to the light in which it lived, the unbidden thought that illness or accident might, without any supernatural intervention, snatch him from her for ever, brought tears into the eyes of the gentle and love-lorn Eliza. And ere her journey was ended, she seemed to be presented with a new cause for real alarm.

During the progress of the review, we allowed ourselves, perhaps blamably, to indulge in observation of events not immediately

connected with our persons, or the conduct of our story. Indeed, we have now to acknowledge a greater error than digression to what did not vitally concern us—namely, omission of something that did. The reader has not been apprized, in fact, that one of the most respectable of the yeoman-cavalry corps was headed by Mr. Henry Talbot, who, bravely attired and accoutred, and wearing a settled though not ferocious frown beneath the shadow of his helmet-peak, made one of the most martial and gallant figures in the field.

The timid glance bestowed upon him by his former mistress, as, during the march past the general, he had come rather close to our party, might have told him, that along with some lurking terror of his outraged feelings, and a graceful though involuntary show of womanly consciousness, his appearance had even in her eyes had its due effect. But he either saw her not, or was willing to seem ignorant of her observation or her presence:—perhaps the latter conjecture comes nearest to the truth; for, as he rode by, a cool spectator might have seen him carry his head more proudly, and knit his brow into an expression of hauteur, provoked, it could be supposed, by the ostentatious manner in which his supercilious rival took care to exhibit, at that critical moment, the good terms on which he stood with the fair object of their common love, and the fair cause of their hatred of each other.

Now passing the road, very near to the right of the cavalry line, Eliza caught another glimpse of Harry Talbot, but in such a situation as made him less interesting than ever he had been to her feelings. Rattling Bill stood at his stirrup, in close conversation with Harry, who leant from his saddle more confidentially to pursue the conference:—and, that her old lover should, upon any account, condescend to familiarity with a character so common and disreputable, shocked and disgusted Eliza.

This, at a first glance, was her first feeling: it then changed into a different and more alarming one. While the carriage yet came on, at a distance, it evidently drew the attention of both. They often looked towards it; Bill pointed at it more than once; and, upon all such occasions, their engrossing converse was renewed with vigour.

Suddenly, and with appalling effect, to herself, Eliza once again called up the conjuror's prophecy;—not now, indeed, as one to ensue according to supernatural preordination, but as one to be brought about, in her opinion, by events planned with his knowledge, and planned by—Harry Talbot.

The old lover, maddened by disappointment, had, Eliza concluded, employed this fellow to assist him in thwarting her union with his rival. But could it be possible?—Could Harry Talbot, whom she had known so long and so well, enter into such a league, with such a person, for any dishonourable purpose? No. She

would reject the thought; yet she resolved, without communicating fears that might lead to bloodshed if they did not prove vain, to hold herself watchfully on her guard: and in this undecided state of feeling, Eliza, after losing sight of the objects of her terror, pursued her journey.

We are grieved that we cannot much farther enlighten the reader upon the real subject of the conversation at which our heroine only guessed. Indeed, we arrived, as evesdroppers, within hearing of Talbot and his discreditable acquaintance, only in time to catch the conclusion of their dialogue.

"Slap palms wid me, Capt'n," said Bill, extending his hand; and that of Harry was placed in it.

"Stand by me," he continued, "and, by the piper! you're the man to win her, yet."

"Call upon me, this evening," said Harry, "and come up when it is dark."

"Does your bottle open its throath to a sthranger, Capt'n?"

"It shall be at your service."

"Then I'll be wid you, as sure as I'm a dhroothy sowl—an' so, loock to you, Capt'n!" and they separated.

CHAPTER IX.

It was the day but one succeeding the Review, that Nanny the Knitter was seated, at her own humble request to that effect, in Eliza Hartley's private parlour. She necessarily assumed her old position, before described as "on her hunkers:" her knitting apparatus, in full work, announced, as usual, an intended long conference; and, as on a former occasion, out of respect to her fair patroness, her head was covered solely by a white linen cap, without border or frill, fitting tightly, and allowing to escape some tresses of her strong, grey hair.

She resembled much one of those hieroglyphic representations of the human figure to be found on Egyptian monuments—an uncouth bundle of coarse attire, with, above it, a head clumsily indicative of humanity; for, in truth, Nanny's face was little more than a lump of reddish flesh, of which the features had been so slightly marked as not to be made out without a close inspection.

And no figure one can imagine could look more distinctly out of character with the elegance of the apartment, or more opposed to the beauty, youth, and grace of its gentle mistress. Ireland alone,

at the time we delineate, could supply such a contrast for the artist's pencil: and we have never since seen any thing like it excepting Leslie's Sancho, seated on his stool, in the presence of the sumptuous and queen-like young duchess.

"Well, Nanny," questioned Eliza, "and what is the important matter you have now to communicate?"

"Ah! then, Miss Eliza, my honey, the rason that ould Nanny comes to plank hersef, as it little does fit her, in this nate place here, is by coorse iv a whisper was given to me yestherday-night." She paused, expecting what did occur, that she should be desired to repeat the whisper. Nanny began, however, wide of the mark; while Eliza, who had good cause to know her style, did not, except when taxed beyond endurance, venture to interrupt her.

"There's one Davy Moore, Miss Eliza, my honey, an' he's the only son iv the ould widow Moore, Molly Beehan she's called, most common, by rason it's her father's name, that was Davy Beehan, rest his sowl! talked iv, in his day, on the head o' bein beyant the world wide, for makin' reeds for wavers; an' Molly's son was chrishened afther the grandaddy, ould Davy Beehan, the great reed-maker. An' it would put you laughin', Miss Eliza, my honey, for yoursef to hear the way Molly brags o' the reeds he used to get his livin' by; sich as there's not to be seen, high or low, now-a-days: an' it may be thrue enough; but she's not the one that ought to be ever tellin' us iv id. Mysef, from the day I got an ounce o' the sense in my head, always put it down to be the hoighth o' nonsense to be braggin out o' dead people that's wid the worms long ago, purtect the hearers! an', for the same rason, I never lets on about my own poor father, rest his sowl in glory! Amin:—though he had two milch cows in his bawn, many's the day, an' plenty widin an' widout, an' store of every thing, an' to spare besides—though I say id that shouldn't say id."

"Nanny, you must allow I have patience with you; what has all this to do with the information you promised me?"

"Och, then! Miss Eliza, my pet, it's you has patience; an' has every thing that's worth havin'; an' I pray to have it left wid you now and for ever. Amin!"

"Come to the subject, Nanny; my time is precious."

"An' that's what I give for advice to the young girls, when they're beginnin' to think of themsefs too soon, on the head o' gettin' the husbans! Peggy, I'll say—or Anty, or any other name it'll be for the time—'Don't be idle the day long;' mysef is always doin': let it be little, or let it be mooch, it keeps bad thoughts out o' my way—a thousand praises over and over agin be they given, for the use o' my fingers! Bud we were a-talkin' about Molly Beehan, the mother o' Davy Moore, the waver; wasn't id, Miss Eliza, my honey?"

"As you like, Nanny."

"Well, ntchue, ntchue! he lives in the house on the side o' the hill, over the village; an' its said by the neighbours, that Davy Moore has the gift o' seein' ghosts an' fairies, an' the likes, an' his mother the same afore him; an' he'll swear down sthraight, that he sees some o' the sort every day. And so Molly Beehan obsarves me comin' by her dour yestherday evenin', an' she calls afther me: an' 'Nanny,' says she, 'stop and take a mouthful o' supper:' spakin' to mysef.—'Wid all my heart,' says I, makin' answer—'an' it's a friend that axes.' An' I crossed the thrashold, biddin' the blessin o' Heaven afore me,—the way I always, an' ever does: an' says Molly, when we war sittin' down by a good fire o' *schrochs:** hersef on the chair, an' mysef on the stool;—I'm growin' ould, Nanny,' says she.—'Faix, Molly,' says I, 'that's thrue enough!'—She thought, Miss Eliza, I'd say she wasn't! bud, I'm often given to make a little joke for mysef, an' I saw she was hurted at id.'—'An' we're all growin' ould, Molly,' says I; 'may we get the grace to be ready for the last warnin':' an' so we went on with our gosther, the way of all ould people, till it come out what she wanted in arnest. The boy, her son, that's Davy Moore, as I war spakin' of, Miss Eliza, 'ud want a good manager for himsef, when she'd be gone, she tould me; an' she was thinkin' over in her mind to get him marred while she'd be to the fore to choose for him in the manner he'd desarve; for he was a hard-workin' boy, an' a good waver; an' one yard o' linen from his loom is worth three from another's: an' so I sed over for her all the young girls in the place, that's come to the time to be marred for themsefs; an' she pitched her choice on Kitty Gow, the daughter o' *Shawn-à-Gow* beyant; bud, I'm purty sart'n, though Molly has the thought that her own son is a match for a Gow, comely Kitty 'ill be thinkin' conthrary-wise; for she's the truth iv a nate clane crature! not to spake iv a likin' she has though she won't let on, that I tould you of, Miss Eliza; an' Davy is only middlin' to look at—ornary in the fatures, though a big sthrong man: bud, for all that, a handy waver. An' it often turns out, that them hansome boys doesn't make the best o' husbans; an' war it comin' to my oun turn to do the thing, I'd never mind the face o' the man: howsomdever, it's not the same wid younger girls; an', to tell the blessed thruth, when I was younger mysef, an' we'll say nothin' o' my bein' purty, though I'm not despisable to look at, I was like the rest, all for plaisin' the eye; an' a clane boy poor Tom was! an' good and industhrous—rest his sowl in glory above! Amin. An' Kitty could twist Davy round her finger; for he wouldn't as much as cross the threshold widout her lave; the same he does by his ould mother this day: only he's not very bright in the head, I belave, but has some demur, for all he's a good workman; not manin' that

* A peculiar kind of fuel.

it's my business to throw a matther out o' my way by tellin' my mind to his mother, concarnin' whatsomever I 'spect, but let her go on, and do my endayvour, an' then she can't lay blame to my dour.

"An', says Molly to me, says she, 'The boy is gettin' into years himself, Nanny—farther nor people thinks—bud'—an' she whispered me not to tell it to sthrangers—'he's nigh-hand upon forty, Nanny; bud'—says she, agin—'there's no use o' talkin' o' that to Shawn-a-Gow's people.'—'You're doin' a wise turn, Molly,' says I, 'to be keepin' the story to yourself; for though forty is not over ould for a marryin'-boy, it's the hoighth o' what's foolish to be talkin' about bodies' ages, be they men or be they women, an' many's the time it does a hurt:—an' you'll see fools o' people, Molly,' says I, 'an' nothin' 'ill sarve 'em bud they must be given to writin' down, in books, an' the like, the day their childher come into this ugly, sinful world—may we be kep' from all evil in id, hopin' for glory in the hereafther!"

Eliza had frequently amused a leisure hour with Nanny's peculiar strain of volubility, allowing the old woman to gossip on just as was pleasing to herself; and having once tolerated the habit, for pastime, she could not now hope to control it, however disinclined to feel amused, and although suffering its infliction in expectancy of some result interesting to her present situation.

It might, under any circumstances, prove, indeed, impossible to drive Nanny from the circuit always prescribed for excursion previous to her arrival at a given point. And yet she never rose from her "hunkers" until, according to her own fashion, any informamation proposed was fully and clearly communicated. Her manner of telling stories much resembled the accompanying process of knitting her stockings. If the first few loops gave to an observer no idea of the shape of the article of which they were the embryo, neither did her first words seem remotely to concern the intelligence she was anxious to convey;—after many, many rounds, both, however, were found connected, in unbroken series, with the gradually-formed stocking and subject. And on she knitted, and on she talked, without pause, or the slightest variety of intonation, compelling the hearer to listen to her diligently looping of word upon word, until she produced, at length, a finished discourse,—quite to the purpose, however unpromising it might at first have appeared; and fitting the occasion as cleverly as her manufacture was known to adhere to the legs of her customers. But Eliza now lost all patience with her.

"I have attended, Nanny, to your unceasing tongue, in the vain hope of catching a word that concerned me, and at last arrive at the conclusion that you come here merely to gossip;—but I am not in the humour for your stories to-day; and, in fact, we must part."

"Oh, then, Miss Eliza, my honey, don't turn me away, nor don't go from me, becase what's to come concarns you much, an' it's fittin' you ought to hear id—an' sure ye well know, my graw! I wouldn't be so bould as to be cockin' mysef up here, like *my-lady-in-ordha'** if 'twasn't for your good, Miss Eliza, my honey!"

"Then, Nanny, endeavour to leave out all farther preface, and do come to the subject."

"An' sure I will, Miss Eliza, my pet, wid the help from above; an' why not? You know it was spakin' to Molly Beehan I was, my honey?"

"I am sorry, Nanny, you mistook the person."

"Well, I tould you, Miss Eliza, that Davy Moore, the waver,—the boy Molly an' I was talkin' about,—has a gift o' seein' things the neighbours can't get a sight of; an', to spake nothin' but the thruth, they haven't much wish for the same. The mother, Molly Beehan, has the like gift, bud not near so good as Davy Moore. Well; Davy was at the pradin' o' the sodgers, the day afore yisterday; an' he was lookin' at a terrible man they call Rattlin' Bill, throwin' dice there, as I'm tould, in the divil's name; an' sure the wicked sinner must go for to tell poor Davy, he'd send him ridin' on a *thrawneen* a year and a day, wid the fairies, only because Davy hadn't money for him; an' Davy come home an' tould his mother; an' the both wint back together, wid some money to him; an' the moment Molly Beehan saw Rattlin' Bill, she knew him well, though all the people here thinks him a sthranger; an' then she grew more afeard, knowin' the man had the power to do what he said he would. An' so she was makin' up to give him the hoosh-money, when she seen him bleedin' a sodger—a man in years—an' I'm sorry to call him a fool into the bargain—that went a sodgerin' in his ould days, when he ought to be makin' his sowl; an' sure, Miss Eliza, my honey, Molly was waitin' for her time to spake wid him on the head o' not doin' any thing to Davy, an' she follyed him about the place, until she hard him whisperin' you, my graw; an' she hard him tellin' you, Miss Eliza, that you'd never be marred to the brave gintleman, Sir William Judkin, the honey pet! while grass grew or wather run: an' to know did Rattlin' Bill say such a thing in thrue arnest, is what brings me to plump mysef down here, where the sort o' me has no call to be?"

"There was a presuming person addressed me to that effect, indeed, Nanny," said Eliza, a little startled at the old woman's first mysterious allusions to the dice-thrower.

"Then presarve us from the power iv all evil things and people, now an' for ever, Amin!" said Nanny, crossing her forehead, and piously looking upward; "that's a bad chance for you, Miss Eliza, my honey-pet, when the heart is fixed upon the love o' the han-

* My high lady—one assuming a station unfitted to her.

some, good-nathured gintleman; an' 'll be sore hearted, I'm afeard, wid the loss iv him, Lord help id!"

"Tush, Nanny; I am only sorry I did not represent his impertinence to my father, and have the man punished for his freedom."

"An' you don't b'lieve what he says 'ill come to pass, Miss Eliza, my honey?"

"Do you think me a fool, silly woman? Unless the fellow is an agent in some plot, devised and to be executed by another, with whom I have seen him in conversation, I can laugh at such a ridiculous prophecy."

"An' who was the other you seen him talkin' to, Miss Eliza?"

"I grieve to say—Harry Talbot."

"Ah! then, as sure as I'm a lump iv a sinner afore glory, this holy and blessed day, maybe there is somethin' o' the sort goin' on, my poor graw iv a Miss Eliza."

"Explain yourself, Nanny; and now, for Heaven's sake! be brief and to the purpose."

"I never seen Rattlin' Bill, to know who he was; but it comes into my head that I laid eyes on him, for all that, the very mornin' o' this day, an' overhard him, morebetoken, spakin' some words to Square Talbot. Tell us, Miss Eliza, is Rattlin' Bill a thick short man wid a bauld saucy face and a cunnin' look wid his eyes, a thiefish gait o' goin', and second-hand *shuckerawn** clothes on his back, differin' from the honest counthry-people's sthrong, lastin' frieze, that looks like as if he picked up one thing here an' another there, an' none o' the same kind."

"You have described the man, Nanny."

"See that!—it was him, then, I obsaarved and hard, sure enough, wid Square Talbot—bad manners to him, I say, for keepin' sich company!"

"Tell me, clearly, what you saw and heard, Nanny."

"It was brave an' arly in the mornin' when I left Molly Beehan's cabin, Miss Eliza, my honey! an' I was makin' my way over to the Coort here, becase the heart widin me longed to ax your ownsef about what she was tellin' me: an' to be here soon, I was makin' a short cut through the fields, Miss Eliza my pet;—an' its a way I have to be sayin' my prayers afore me arly in a mornin'; blessed be the holy name, I says a little share, at all times: sich as three pattherin-aveys or the likes, or maybe more, or maybe less; jist as I'm hurrid, or has time; an' gives my thanks, the best I'm able, for all things, when I rise up from my bed; and, becase I'm growin' ould, like Molly Beehan, an' moost be thinkin' o' the last home,—purtect the hearers!—I always says exthra prayers, goin' quite an' asy, along the fields, an' the road, an' while I'm fastin': an' morebetoken, it behoulds us to offer up a prayer,

* Meanly-contrived.

too, for our bennyfacthors; an', never a day o' my life, Miss Eliza, my honey, bud I says three pattherin-aveys an' a creed, an' axes Heaven to give you loock an' happiness, on the head o' them: an' the same I'll do to my dyin' day, an' afther—when I'm gone into my Glory, as I have hopes iv, poor sinner that I am,—the mercies on my wicked sowl now, an' in the day o' judgment, Amin.

"Well. I was goin' the path by the ditch,* that's about one or two fields, more or less, from Square Talbot's house; an' his voice sounded at th' other side, an' a great, hoarse voice makin' answer to him; an' I stopped in my prayers, keepin' the dicket o' my bades betuxt my fingers, till I'd know where to begin again: an' I sed to mysef 'twould be betther not to go in Square Talbot's way, for fear he'd pay me, maybe, for all his misfort'ns; that I mayt'n't sin, says I, it's a little way but he might hurt me; an' so I sits down, an' stoops my head, the manner he couldn't ketch a view o' me; an' up he come, at th' other side o' the ditch, he an' his crony—an' merry asther to me—bud they stopt for a little start, fornent me; and I hard Square Talbot sayin'—"

(To give an idea of a person of superior cast, Nanny assumed a lofty tone of voice, held up her head, and looked as grand as she could.)

"'An' when do you mane to bring your plans into action,' (I believe it was,) says Square Talbot, spakin' to the impident lookin' rogue iv a fellow, as free as if he was discoorsin' one iv of his own sort.

"'All in good time,' says th' other, in his big hoarse voice, but not hoarse the way a body would be when he'd kitch a cowld, bud like as if he was spakin' far down in his throath."

Nanny need not have described Rattling Bill's cadence, as she had ably imitated it while giving his words; and she again took up a high tone to represent the squire's manner and bearing.

"'Wouldn't id be betther,' says Square Talbot, makin' answer to th' other, 'wouldn't id be betther to go on in the plain, simple way I advise?' 'Hah!' says his crony agin, an' this was by way iv a laugh, but it wasn't a laugh, bud more like the gruff bark iv a bull-dog when he'd be runnin' to seize a hoult he wouldn't let go till the piece came out wid him—'Hah!' says he, 'lave all that to me, Capt'n; an' if I don't put 'em asundher—'"

"Good Heavens!" interrupted Eliza.

"'If I don't put 'em asundher, an' lave you the prize to make your own iv her,—why, Bill Nale does'nt know what he's about, that's all, though I would'nt b'lieve the *bosthoon* 'ud tell him as mooch.'

"'You may depend on my eternal gratitude,' says Square Talbot, an' they both biggined to walk away wid themsefs; an' pullin'

*Hedge, meant.

off the hat, an' cockin' the ear out from my head, I jest hard the bould-lookin' man sayin'—(Nanny bent her head, and again spoke in her throat)—'An' a thankful gintleman wid a purse in his pocket, I'm proud o' knowin'!' an' then they went beyant my hearin'; an' when they was far out o' soight, I crossed the ditch, an' made my way to the Coort dhroppin my dicket, an' sayin' all the prayers on my bades afore me as I went; two pattherin-aveys for one body; two more for another body; maybe three for another body, jest accordin' wid their bein' good bennyfacthors; an' when I sed 'em all out-an'-out, I put up the bades in the little pouch is for 'em, here a-one-side o' the big pocket that houlds the worsted, an' all sorts; an' I was wonderin what the two was talkin' about; bud, faix! Miss Eliza, my honey, it never come into my thick head that you and the darlin' Sir William Juddin was concarned in id, till you spoke jest now o' their collodgin together, that you seen wid your own two hansome eyes."

"Oh, Nanny! can this be possible?" Since the old woman's report of Bill's first words, Eliza, almost petrified at being again strongly presented with what was, upon the review-field, only a vague suspicion, had remained in an agitated reverie, scarce alive to the succeeding ramble of the gossip's monotonous voice. The means by which it was threatened to separate her and her lover, were imagined in many frightful shapes, of which the most vivid now appeared in her address to Nanny.

"Oh, Nanny! can this be possible? Can Harry Talbot have been all along such a deception? Could he possibly contemplate—would he be accessary to—" her voice failed her, and died away into a feeble whisper—"to the murder of Sir William Judkin?"

Nanny started in real terror at the sudden, though she soon concluded, not unplausible conjecture.

"Och, purtect us an' save us, now and for ever! Amin. I'll never be the one to say, Miss Eliza, my honey, that Square Talbot 'ud plan sich a terrible thing, Lord keep all sinful an' wicked thoughts o' the sort far from every mother's son: bud—presarve us once again!—there's no knowin' the kind them men is made iv till they're put to the thrial; an' more particklar, where the love is crossed wid 'em. I knew many a one in my time do things, when their hearts 'ud be scalded that-away, that no one in the world wide 'ud think they'd do aforehand; an' sure I tuck it on myself to larn the fashion Square Talbot went on at home, sence the day he larned you would'nt have him; an' his ould housekeeper, (she and myself are gossips, by rason she stood for the little girl o' mine poor Tom's only child, now settled snug in Ross town, praises be given!)—Nelly tould me that he's not the laste like himself, that used to be; bud has the cloud on his brows for ever, an' goes through the house widout spakin a word, or else a wicked one to whomsomdever opens their lips to him, or stands afore him."

"Heaven protect me, then, Nanny!"

"Bud I'm amost afeard to tell you, my honey, what it is 'll make id the greatest thrial to my darlin' pet, Miss Eliza."

"Say it out, Nanny."

"Och! then, the mercies above grant you grace an' patience through the whole you'll have to suffer, Miss Eliza. You war sprightly, an' you war hearty, an' 'twould make an ould heart to be joyful only to look on your sun-shiny face, my graw; an' a sharp body might be sayin' you war giddy, an' had no notion o' thinkin' afore you: an' why not? for it was a fair mornin', an' no sign iv a storum to blacken id; but poor Nanny saw you had only the joy o' young days upon you; an' that there was sense an' forecast waitin' in your heart, for the time that 'ud come: an' I put thrust in the Holy Name, for you, that when your thrials flock thick about you, you'll be stout an' able for 'em all."

Nanny paused a moment, and looked, through swimming eyes, at her fair young auditor, who, in return, bent upon the old woman such a look of troubled attention as might be wondered at, if one considered the contrast in rank, education, and state of intellect between the two persons. But Nanny's manner was impressive: in more instances than one, Eliza had reason to judge favourably of her discriminating powers: and, without speaking, she now eagerly nodded her head for her strange counsellor to proceed.

"Here it is, Miss Eliza. That terrible man, Rattlin' Bill, *has* the power to know that your love 'll be erased, an' that you'll never be a wife where the mind is settled for marryin'; an', for the same rason, he goes wid himself to Square Talbot, an' he tells him that he's the boy to put a bar betuxt you and Sir William, an' so he gets money on the head iv id."

Eliza, although real cause for alarm still remained in the alliance between Harry Talbot and the dice-thrower, could not avoid smiling at Nanny's final demonstration of the fate to which the old gossip's pathetic speech had just doomed her. A weight of apprehension was indeed raised off her heart. And, as in silence she followed up the tendency of Nanny's credulous communication, it seemed that even serious fears might be dissipated by it.

After a reverie of some length, during which her companion studiously and compassionately watched her—

"Nanny," said Eliza briskly, "your simple commentary shows me at once this knave's drift; he is only exercising his ingenuity on Harry Talbot, whose mind, weakened and off its guard, by the indulgence of strong passions, catches at any absurd prospect held out to it, and so fits him to become a dupe.

"But they talked iv plans, my honey pet?"

"Yes," I forgot that," said Eliza, again alarmed.

"An' them plans," continued Nanny, awfully, "is dalins wid—— I'm afeard to spake the word—bud——*chrosh-o'-Chrustha* keep us from his power! It's the——Divil, I mane."

"I credit no such fables, Nanny; and if such indeed be the man's pretended agency in his plans, I can again smile at him and them. And now, I farther recollect, that, according to the discourse you have repeated, this juggler has not disclosed to Harry his proposed method of winning for him an unwilling bride; of course they are not connected *in a plan*, whatever it may be; and, while in poor Talbot's view it can only extend to the harmless endeavour of witchcraft or magic, he is not even allowed to learn the form of incantation."

"Some o' your words, Miss Eliza, I know the manin iv, an' some I don't; bud no matther for that: I'll tell you the histhory o' Bill Nale, or Rattlin' Bill, as they call him, because he's a blustherin man, an', morebetoken, follys the thrade o' rattlin o' dice at fairs and pottheens."

"Well, Nanny, go on."

And Nanny pursued the narrative in her usual digressive style. But we will now venture to report her in our own language.

Molly Beehan was her authority for the account. Thirty years before the time of our tale, Molly held herself to be still young, and, as she asserted, "well to look at." In those days, she took a journey into the south of the county of Wexford, to visit a maternal relative; and during her sojourn there, Rattling Bill came under her notice.

He was the only son of a decrepit widow, a native of the North, as her account told, who had come to settle in a lone cottage by the road-side. At her appearance amongst the more primitive Southerns, Bill was a lad of about eighteen. His mother and himself had little visible means of subsistence; yet they never either begged or wanted. The old woman seldom ventured out of her cottage; and Bill became known as a handsome fellow, with an exuberant flow of spirits, and a careless, blustering humour. He would sometimes work in the harvest, the potato-digging, or the hay-making seasons; but was generally idle, and had money in his pocket notwithstanding. With the fair sex, young Bill became a favourite, and so, for some time, continued; but tales to the disadvantage of his mother and himself afterwards gained ground; and then he was avoided by all, excepting some careless persons of his own stamp.

In fact, it began to be whispered that people were losing their butter; and several other mishaps, which could not well be accounted for, were, after some consideration, attributed to the machinations of ould Granny Nale.

A passionate man, in the neighbourhood, quarrelled with his family, deserted them, and went away, no one could tell whither.

Those he forsook remained miserably anxious to learn his fate. In their distress, it was hinted to them by a neighbour, to seek information at the hands of "Granny Nale," and accordingly they visited her dwelling.

A dingy pack of cards supplied her with the means of forming her incantation: and, consulting these in her bed, whence for the last year she had not been able to stir, the hag informed the disconsolate family, that the absent man was at that moment in the County of Kerry, sojourning with a relation whose person and condition she described, and whom, from her picture, they at once recognized.

The eldest son of the deserted family undertook a journey to this person's house; found his father living in it; induced him to return home: and now, the terrible fame of the old woman spread far and wide, and while many stolen visits were paid to her cabin by those who, in various cases of difficulty, threw themselves upon her advice, she became generally feared and detested as a person who held a diabolical connexion.

She died, or rather, when upon a certain occasion a certain person repaired to her dwelling for supernatural assistance in a pressing emergency, Granny Nale had disappeared, and was never again heard of. The neighbours vainly looked to see her buried in some sort or other; and, after the lapse of a week, knowingly and mysteriously observed to each other that they might as well "be lookin' for a dead ass, or a tinker's funeral;"—events proverbially held to be impossible among the Irish peasantry. But, however she had been conveyed away, or wherever she had gone, there was, soon after her disappearance, a visible increase, with many housewives, in the quantity of butter, upon a churning-day.

Bill had now the cabin to himself; and it transpired that he inherited a portion of his mother's secrets, and, in some peculiar respects, even outstripped her divining skill. His passion for card-playing was excessive; he sought to indulge it, amongst his simple neighbours, on all possible occasions; and whenever he played, another instance of his preternatural endowments became apparent —he always won. With cards too, as had been his mother's habit, he undertook to tell fortunes and develope the darkest secrets: and it was well known, so it was—

At this part of the narration, Nanny paused, looked frightened, and, after some attempts to master herself, proceeded:

"Iv a thruth, Miss Eliza, I'm sore afeard to tell the way he got lave to do every thing wid them unloocky things—them cards:—the praises be given! one o' the sort was never widin my hands, barrin a time that I found some iv 'em on Jimmy Sheehan's dhresser, when I helped to bile the praties wid 'em, an' nobody the wiser —an' I can as good as be on my oath that I seen 'em goin' up the chimbly in a blaze o' fire.—But I'm afeard, as I tould you, my

honey! to let out the way Bill Nale got his power over the cards" —lowering her voice to its least whisper. She drew out her beads, passed over her forehead the cross attached to them, and then holding it before her—"Evil things," continued Nanny, "don't come near that sign, an', by coorse, can't come near them that houlds it —an', so, while it's forment me, I'll tell out, at last, the way Bill Nale got the power."

And slowly and hesitatingly did Nanny reveal the dread process. We forbear to repeat her words, although they have been faithfully transmitted to us, and although we have the best authority for asserting that in more cases than that of Bill Nale, attempts have, even recently, been made to obtain, by his method, the mastery over chance and fortune he was supposed to possess. It will be sufficient to mention, that the form according to which, by Nanny's account, the mountebank called on the aid of the Prince of Darkness, was gone through under the roof of the chapel he sometimes visited, and during the occurrence of a certain part of the usual service:—we may add, that if the slightest religious feeling had ever stirred in the wretch's bosom, the moment of his blaspheming apostasy, however really futile its mummery, ought to have been felt by him to an appalling intensity.

Soon after his mother's death, Bill Nale found himself avoided by his neighbours—a marked and lonely man, openly dreaded and secretly hated, with whom none of his kind would hold intercourse. Suddenly, his cabin-door appeared closed, and he was not to be seen in the district. As suddenly it appeared open, and Bill reinstalled in it—and with him a wife, or companion, whom he had just brought home.

And this wife, or companion, proved to be a more mysterious personage than even Bill or his mother ever had been. Twice only was she seen by any one living near them; once by a young peasant, who, during his momentary absence, went into Bill's dwelling to consult him upon some difficult question; and a single glance at her, and her words and manner to this person that had "intruded on her," bespoke a lady of high condition; but haughty and dark to an excess that almost made the youthful stranger tremble. Upon the second occasion of her being openly seen by another neighbour, she was on her way, accompanied by Bill, out of the district, to which they never again returned,—and her appearance and bearing fully confirmed the former impression.

All this happened, according to Molly Beehan, some thirty years ago; yet, at Bill's re-appearance to her eyes, after that lapse of time, and so far from the scene of his youthful notoriety, she immediately recognized him.

But, with regard to his wonderful wife, many stories prevailed of the manner in which she became united to him; but one in particular, whispered by a close intimate of Bill, gained superior re-

pute, and in Molly Beehan's estimation, in Nanny's, and in ours, seems, therefore, entitled to historical notice.

Bill was universally known to be a fellow of daring, bravado humour, which feared neither man, devil, nor angel. And he was going along, of a starry night, still more humorously and bravely inclined by the aid of whiskey, and singing and shouting as loudly as he could, when suddenly he heard strange voices about him. He stopped and listened.

"A horse for me!" said a voice. He turned briskly to the quarter whence it came, but could see no one.

"A horse for me!" said another voice; and, "A horse for me!" "A horse for me!" was repeated, in quick succession, at every point around him.

"And a horse for me, too!" cried Bill, giving a shout and a jump.

The words were scarcely uttered, when he found himself on the back of a steed, that capered and curveted "in great style:"—he heard a "huzza!" from a hundred tiny throats; away galloped his courser, like the north wind over a hill-side in winter; and as he swept along, he could not be ignorant that, before him, and behind him, and at each side of him, other horses were racing just as fiercely.

Away, away, over hedge, ditch, and brook, through thick and thin, Bill and his comrades galloped, until of a sudden, and of its own accord, his spirited steed stopped before a large house, situated—heaven knows where! And all the attendant horsemen stopped too; and Bill, looking round him, now saw the riders; and from amongst them, one melancholy-looking wight came to his side, and addressed him.

"Bill Nale," said he, speaking in a brogue of tiny cadence, "stand upon the back of your horse, and climb in through yonder window."

"For what rason?" asked Bill.

"Upon a sofa, in the chamber into which it leads, you'll find a beautiful young lady sleeping; take her softly in your arms, and bear her down to us: we cannot assist you, because there is a certain spaniel dog, also asleep, at her feet,—so, in with you."

"Never say it again, ma-bouchall," answered Bill; " an' glad am I o' the offer;" and he climbed in at the window as desired, found the lady just as had been foretold to him, took her in his arms without ever awaking her, descended with her from the window, placed her before him on his horse; and—"Well done, Bill Nale!" was the general cry, and the whole cavalcade set off, over the ground they had come, at even a wilder pace than before, until they reached the spot where Bill first mounted his steed; and now there was a second halt, and they all surrounded Bill and the lady, shouting "Down! down! down!"

But Bill Nale did not shout "Down!" but remained quietly seated on his charger with the fair prize still asleep in his arms.

"Come down, Bill Nale," added the personage who had before addressed him—"you must come down, at least;"—and Bill found himself standing on the road; but still he held the lady close.

"Give her to me, now," continued the same individual.

"Give her to you, is id?" asked Bill.

"Yes; she is my sweetheart."

"To the seventeen duouls wid you!" said Bill; "I have a likin' for her myself, and never as much as a finger will you lay on her."

"Give her up, Bill Nale, or rue it!" exclaimed his enraged rival.

"Give her up, give her up, or we'll cripple you!" shouted his friends.

"Bother!" shouted Bill, in return; "D'ye think, ye *shecogs** o' the Divil, that it's a *bosthoon* ye have to talk to? I know how to match ye! an' let ye only daare to come widin arum's length, an' see if I don't pelt ye, by dozens, over Donard Hill, into the sey! Aha! I'm the boy for ye! Give her up, *inagh?* Och, ay; give ye what's my own arnin?"

"We'll make you out a store of riches, Bill Nale, if you yield possession of my sweetheart," said the most interested personage of the throng.

"That's more o' the yarn," answered Bill, "*Arragh*, go spake to them that doesn't know ye! Riches? Ay; ye'd fill me a bag full of slates, lookin' like goold guineas, bud they'd be nothin' bud slates in the mornin'. Make off, I tell ye! I have a charm here, in my pocket; an' if ye don't, I'll shake id at ye—hah!"—a cock crew—"d'ye hear that? run for your lives now, or the cock 'ill ate ye!"

Whether in despair of succeeding against him, or that the cock-crow was indeed a thing they could not withstand, the discomfited rout, with a low, wild wailing, that gradually died along the midnight blast, disappeared in a trice.

And the lady, thus won, was, the neighbours said, the same he brought home to his cabin, and with whom he shortly after left the country, that is, the south of the County of Wexford, never again to appear in it. But, ere the conclusion of our story, we shall endeavour, for the reader's satisfaction, to collect more correct information of her identity.

* Fairies.

CHAPTER XX.

Sufficient good sense will be accorded to Eliza, and sufficient mastery over her artificial prepossession for the supernatural, to enable her to reject Nanny's views of the terrible in Rattling Bill's character. At the same time, it will be observed that, from a portion of the gossip's whole communication, our heroine was warranted in drawing new and real fear of the man, and dislike of his practices.

Having dismissed her cunning and crédulous, but very honest old counsellor, with an injunction to keep her watchfulness alive, Eliza proceeded, at a pace more sedate and measured than we recollect to have before seen her adopt, to take her seat in the drawing-room, where Miss Alicia was closely engaged over her inexhaustible embroidery. So different, indeed, from her usual happy step, was the gait with which her aunt heard her approach and enter the room, that the good old lady raised her head, to note who the supposed stranger might be.

"Dear child," she said, "is it you? How pensive and languid!—what is the matter?"

"I can scarcely inform you, aunt; at least, not clearly and distinctly. I am in bad spirits, that's all." The confused state of Eliza's apprehension of what had just been detailed to her, left her, indeed, unable, if she were willing, to communicate the cause of her dejection.

"I trust, my love, you experience nothing like a presentiment of evil," continued Miss Alicia, ever tender and romantic.

"I do not know, dear aunt; and yet it is, perhaps, under such a depression I labour."

"Heaven grant you may misconceive the nature of your sensations, Eliza! for, oh!—" (Miss Alicia's usual sigh, deprived of all spirit by constant exercise, sounded, though loudly given, rather as an accompaniment than as a signification of woe.) "I remember but too well, that for a month previous to the dreadful account of my never-to-be-forgotten loss, I was visited by deep forebodings of unhappy tidings; and, my dear niece, although my mind is strong enough to reject the notion of supernatural prognostic, and although even the fact I allude to did not induce a general credulity, permit me farther to inform you that *his* death was foretold to the wretched survivor."

"Dear aunt, is it possible?" questioned Eliza, sitting down, and looking anxiously at the old lady.

"It is an unquestionable truth, child; I will relate the circumstances. Upon an October evening, the twilight setting in, I was walking down the avenue, more careless than I now am of the sharp breeze that rudely discomposed my youthful locks, and blew hardily against my forehead. The leaves were falling, and I mournfully watched their twirling on the wind, the last time they were to feel its upward current. Between two of the venerable trunks that lined my path, an aged and meanly attired female suddenly appeared. She craved charity in the uncouth accent of the Northerns—"

"A northern woman, you say, aunt?"

"Yes, my love; the accent, so very different from our southern one, is easily recognized."

"And how long is this ago?"

"Alas! the never-to-be-effaced date can by me be readily and faithfully supplied: I speak of an evening over which Time has rolled the shadows of more than thirty years."

Eliza looked more sombre still. Her good old aunt continued.

"She craved a charity from me. The suddenness of her appearance had somewhat startled me, and I did not immediately reply. She renewed her petition in an impatient manner: I felt for my purse—found that I had left it behind me; and was consequently obliged to give a refusal. She spoke again: her voice was, in its lowest key, an unpleasant one; now it sounded like a continued scream.

" 'You have a hard heart!' she said.

" 'Indeed, good woman,' I answered, 'I would anxiously relieve your wants, were the means at present to my hand.'

" 'Tell me no such story!' she screamed again: 'but, for your want of charity, listen to me: you will have sorrow of your own to think of! You will never again look on him whose image is, this moment, uppermost in your mind: a strange land will hide his bones.'

Miss Alicia's voice here sank low, and a tear trembled in her "lack-lustre eye;" and was responded to by another pearly drop in that of her niece.

"In a month after," she added, "I learned his death!"

"Did the shocking woman go away as soon as she had said these words, aunt?"

"No, dear child: I stood for a moment astonished and terror-stricken. She confronted me. I then thought I saw another figure, the figure of a man, moving slowly and stealthily from behind another trunk—"

"Dreadful!" whispered Eliza.

"Dreadful!" cried a voice of thunder in Eliza's ear.

Both ladies screamed in unison; and with a sudden jerk of her head, which had been brought closely in contact with Miss Alicia's, our heroine displaced, and somewhat shattered, her aunt's spectacles. A loud laugh succeeded, and Sir William Judkin, after soothing the agitation he had caused, took an opportunity to ask, with particular meaning, "Do you give any credit to prognostics of the nature of that with which, I apprehend, the wild woman favoured you, dear madam?"

"No? my good young friend: although in the particular instance referred to, the prophecy proved, alas! but too accurate." Miss Alice's cold long-drawn sigh followed.

"Well; we need not become utterly credulous, even while we refuse, in a particular case, to remain obstinate to our own experience: and I rejoice to divine from your wisdom, dear Miss Alice, reasons why I should not despise a prediction which has been spoken to myself this morning."

The ladies looked interested.

"In good earnest, yes. You remember a knavish fellow who attracted our notice in the review-field?"

"The dice-thrower?" questioned Eliza earnestly.

"Yes; he who consulted his dice as we are told astrologers read the stars; and whispered disclosures into ears that, if one might judge by the faces of the listeners, were not prepared to receive, in such a manner, such intelligence."

"I noticed all this," said Eliza gravely, and with increasing interest."

"Well. The fellow's blustering cleverness much attracted me—perhaps there is something in a superior mind, even when exercising its mastery for knavish purposes, which we cannot avoid to admire. On my way hither to-day, I encountered this conjuror; and he it was who spoke this augury to me."

"And that augury gave you such good spirits?" asked Eliza.

"It did, indeed."

"Then it was a happy one?" she continued, recollecting how contrary had been the import of Rattling Bill's prophecy to herself, and anxious to learn whether or not his promises to Sir William were in connexion with a certain subject.

"Listen, dearest Eliza, and judge. I had seen the man standing at the road-side, long before I rode up to him. As soon as we met, he pulled off his hat, and made me a salute of friendly recognition. I returned his civility, reined up within speaking distance, and requested to know whither he was bound."

" 'I was waitin' to meet your honour; and well did I guess the road you'd be spurrin' over,' he answered, smiling cunningly.

"There is an approach to careless, saucy familiarity in the varlet's manner, that almost sues for chastisement: and yet a jocu-

larity and a peculiar acknowledgment of addressing a superior to qualify his boldness, and save him from salutary discipline.

"'Waiting for me, Sir?' I asked; 'and upon what account, pray?'

"'I have a matther in my knowledge that concarns your honour,' he replied."

It is to be remarked, that the Baronet successfully imitated the manner and the brogue of the person he was portraying.

"'Let me hear it, then,' I said.

"'I'm tould your honour has an open hand;—an' so every one to his thrade, as the mouse-thrap-maker said to the lord bishop. Did your honour ever hear the story?'

"'Never; but, I presume, I am now to hear it.'

"'There was a mouse-thrap-maker, an' he lived by his thrade; an' he'd make a rat-thrap just as handy. An'—(no help for id, I hear!)—his lordship's reverance was very round, an' smooth, an' comfortable to look at. 'Have you your prayers, my good man?' says he to the rat-thrap-maker.—'A neighbour's share,' says the other. 'Repate 'em for me.' The mouse-thrap-maker done his best; but he went asthray, an' made bud a middlin' offer enough; an' morebetoken, he put in a curse in the middle, becase his work went wrong wid him, from minding two things at the same time. 'I'm ashamed o' my life o' you, for one ould sinner," says the bishop, 'to come to this time o' life, an' not to have your prayers.'—"Will you answer me a foolish sort iv a question?' says the mouse-thrap-maker.—'By coorse,' says the bishop, making answer.—'Well, asthore: what's the length o' this wire, that 'ill go to make a mouse-thrap?'—'I'm sartin I can't tell,' says the bishop again.—'Well, then, every man to his thrade,' says the other: 'an' so, do you mind yours, an' I'll mind mine, and there'll be no jostlin' on the road betwuxt us."

"He told this anecdote humorously," continued Sir William.

"And truly," said Miss Alice, "I think your imitation must be equally good; I have seen, on the stage, worse specimens than you give us of the drollery of the Irish character!"

"That is flattering, dear Madam, but I believe I have a talent for catching the rich peculiarities of our humble countrymen. As to the stage, mention it not;—one seldom sees any thing represented there, but a broad, unnatural caricature of the Irishman, which depends for effect exclusively upon a novel and extravagant mode of speaking, set off by buffoonery and grimace, and studiously put in contrast with the propriety of tone and manner about it. And while even the genuine brogue is thus unknown or disregarded,—a brogue, by the way, not half as barbarous as many to be found throughout England,—the strong intellect of the Irish of the lower classes, displayed in their most humorous sallies, and

redeeming them from absurdity, even while they are amusing, is, generally speaking, almost lost sight of."

"This may be very true; but you are straying from the subject," said Eliza.

With apologies to his "lovely remembrancer," and other speeches, Sir William proceeded.

"The application to himself of the anecdote made by my acquaintance, was, that the announcement of future events formed part of his professional practice; and so, "every man to his thrade:" and before he would tell me what was to happen to me, he expected his fee. To such an arrangement, notwithstanding the flattering report my soothsayer had heard of my openhandedness, I demurred, however; but finally it was agreed, that I should measure my recompense by the value of the information to be conveyed, strictly bargaining to pay the moment he should have ended his prognostic; and, after all, I suspect this bargain amounted pretty nearly to payment in advance: so that I believe I was outwitted.

"All preliminaries having been settled—'Now,' quoth my prophet of prophets, 'I come here to tell your honour to go on bravely, an' like a man, at the big house—for—' and 'he grinned intelligence,' as Sterne has it, 'from ear to ear.'"

Sir William made a full stop. He perceived, notwithstanding Miss Alice's praises of his imitative powers, that his talent had at last been too faithfully exercised. His mistress's cheeks flamed at the common allusion to their relative situations and mutual feelings, and with a severe brow her eyes glanced downward. He turned to Miss Alice. She had ceased her embroidering, folded her arms perpendicularly, sat up in her chair, and was curving her long and stately neck at him.

"How the deuce," he muttered, "am I to get out the rest? If a mere allusion covers the one with angry blushes, and sets the other erecting her maiden crest in this absurd fashion, what is to happen when they hear all that they must hear? Let me see;—the words in which the rascal conveyed his promise of happiness to me, may be translated."

A minute's pause ensued. He was not desired by either lady to go on.

"Yet neither am I forbidden," he continued, in soliloquy; "and women are not women, if some little yearnings of curiosity do not, this moment, lurk under all that grandeur of brow, in my Eliza's heart. As to the old maiden, a fico for her and her affectation."

Thus rallying, he resumed aloud—"But I believe, fair ladies, I had best retain, for the joyousness of my individual bosom, an account of the future fortune prophesied to me; less interested persons might, I allow, consider it a very terrible threat."

"Make an end of the matter, Sir William," said Eliza, "but,

pray, use your own style of language—the language of a gentleman: there is a reason why I should learn the tendency of that rude person's words to you."

"No doubt, beautiful daughter of Eve!—and I see I can still read a woman's heart through her brow," thought Sir William; and he went on aloud, with a grave and, as it were, timorous expression of features, although his speech and the tones of his voice had a different character. "Dearest and fairest Eliza, in obeying your command, I trust nothing will occur to startle you; but, in truth, the gifted man merely assured me, on the authority of I do not know what powers, that if I conducted myself properly, I—should—be—married; that is the whole matter. And if the Fates so decree, surely I must fulfil my destiny, no matter how dark it may prove to be; in the present instance, I am not however quite disposed to quarrel with the Immortals—for by themselves I swear, that the doom thus woven for me is one, warp and weft, of such dazzling bliss, I cannot steadily fix my weak though grateful eyes upon it."

During this speech, Eliza's cheek often changed from red to pale, and from pale to red. Her thoughts and feelings were of a mixed nature. The half-credulous mood in which Sir William found her upon entering the room, disposed our heroine to listen attentively to his account of Bill's prophecy. And since it now appeared that the juggler promised happiness to her love, all lurking terror of his former augury to herself vanished for ever. Then came the more important reflection, that, notwithstanding poor Nanny's gossip, there could exist no plan, in this man's mind, against a succession of events, which, with such light-hearted foolery and good humour he was himself so anxious to foretell. Nanny must have misapprehended the conversation that, in her sore personal terror, she had imperfectly overheard. Harry Talbot became freed, at the same time, from suspicions degrading to him. All this was great relief to Eliza, as well as to the dismal humour in which, after parting with Nanny, she had approached her aunt in the drawing-room. She raised her head and eyes, in a full return of her usual vivacity; and, only in remuneration for the last brilliant sentence he had spoken, honoured her lover with a glance that made him an enraptured man.

"But I am not asked the name of the angel who, it is prophesied, is to be guardian over my happiness?" he continued.

"In a matter so very delicate, name-telling would be odious," said Eliza.

"Quite improper, indeed," echoed Miss Alice seriously.

"Then I will only describe—" resumed the gay and happy Baronet; "and if it is not admitted by mankind at large, that she is superior to all celestials who are at present vouchsafed to earth, the demurring person or persons I will bid to mortal combat, and

by weapons and valour, and Heaven to guide the issue, prove them false knights, incapable of estimating her excellence and charms."

"*We* will not listen to her praises," said Eliza; "envy is, indeed, beneath the feelings of gentle dames and damsels; still, no lady brooks to be humiliated by hearkening to the overstrained eulogy of another."

"Well; but there was an addition to the augury," continued Sir William.

"Was there?"—questioned Eliza, successfully beguiled into a new interest; and then, noticing the triumphant sparkle of the tempter's eye, she blushed, though she smiled too, and turned away her head to gaze at her aunt.

"Truly was there; and I may now be trusted to continue in the very words of the oracle. 'Your honour 'ill think it's piper's news I'm goin' to tell you—news that you had in your own head afore-hand;—bud did'n't the father o' the lady bid you wait a year?—I know he did—so, you needn't make answer;—now let your honour give ear to me, howsomdever:—four moons won't shine out till my words come to pass—an' now, Sir William, is them tidings worth a purse o' gold, or a purse o' silver?"

"'Whether true or false, my honest fellow," I answered, 'here is your fee.'

"I spurred my horse, and galloped towards Hartley Court. A shout from behind reached me, and, turning round in my saddle, I saw the dice-thrower waving his curious hat, and huzzaing loudly and lustily, as if to my future happiness; and even when we had lost sight of each other, his clamour sounded in my ears."

Eliza, more and more assured that the drift of Rattling Bill's whole manœuvring was to replenish his purse at the hands of every one who would listen to his prophecies, even though he were reduced to the necessity of making, upon the same subject, different promises to different individuals, allowed her good-humour still to increase.

But Miss Alice was immovably grave, notwithstanding that her secret displeasure towards Sir William had evidently subsided; and at length she spoke in a manner that surprised both her companions.

"Eliza, my love! I will thank you to seek out for me, in my dressing-room, a parcel of embroidering silk; here are the keys of my drawers. I cannot exactly instruct you in which drawer it is to be found; but you will not spare a little trouble to oblige me; and, you know, there are particular reasons why I cannot entrust my keys into the hands of a servant."

"Do not doubt my willingness to oblige you, dear aunt!" said Eliza endearingly, and yet, as the cause for her aunt's precaution occurred, with a subdued smile. To Eliza's knowledge, a care-

fully-enveloped bundle of Miss Alice's youthful epistolary correspondence lay under guardianship of the keys given to her; and she had often heard them read, and on the face of them detected affectation and nonsense, such as proved that "the-ever-to-be-remembered" lover was as great a fool as the object of his devotion.

So soon as, with the trip of a fairy and the air of a sylph, her niece had left the drawing-room, the old lady took off her spectacles, hinged them up, deposited them in their case beautifully covered with ornamented silk, put the case in her pocket, and, pushing her working-frame to a little distance, raised her head, and finally addressed the Baronet:—

"Sir William, I am anxious to know what you think of the words spoken to you to day by that rather extraordinary person."

"Dearest Madam! I can answer you only by saying, that there is nothing I would not encounter—no trial, or privation that I would not joyfully submit to—if I felt assured, or even hoped, the augury might be fulfilled. Twelve long months is a dreary term to see placed between me and happiness—oh! could I but experience the delight of calling Eliza mine, after the lapse of a third of that eternity!"

Miss Alice emitted her systematic long-drawn sigh. The Baronet's rhapsody brought to her mind the last pleadings of her own romantic lover, upon the eve previous to the fated day when he embarked for a foreign land, after vainly urging an abridgment of the probation to which she had doomed him; and the recollection of the unfortunate result of her virtuous and dignified obstinacy brought tears of mingled grief and remorse into her eyes, as in a softened voice she answered the Baronet.

"I am an advocate, Sir William, for orderly deliberation in matters of this nature. I regard impatience, on the part of a suitor, as forgetfulness of what is fully due to the dignity of the female character. The naturally more timid and retreating party cannot be contemplated in such a light; but, if ever she can, I blush over her, and shrink from her as from something inconceivably disagreeable. Between acquaintance and attachment, a gradual progress ought to take place. The term allowable for the completion of such a progress is not, perhaps, definable; depending, in a great degree, as it does upon natural dispositions, circumstances, and, I believe, opportunity: nor is it quite necessary that we should establish its precise limits. But again, from attachment to union, a second term of time is properly prescribed; during the lapse of which, mutual tastes and feelings, tempers and propensities, are to be studied, and first impulses weighed, in order that general resemblance may not be confounded with perfect sympathy of character, nor mere inclination with the pure, noble sentiment of true love. And this second term we know how more

particularly to lay down.: in some cases it should extend to three years; in most cases, to two years; and, according to the usual course of attendant events, in no case can it be less than one."—

"Confound your doctrine and yourself," muttered the lover; it need not be added, below his breath.—

"All ladies who feel what is due from themselves to themselves, will readily, indeed naturally, insist upon a probation, on the part of an admirer, of one or other of these spaces of time; their self-estimation being manifested, in my judgment, according to the number of years for which they stipulate. And no highminded gentleman can surely refuse to embrace the tender servitude imposed upon him—none, certainly, who has a proper view of feminine delicacy and worth, or who is aware of the softening influence, over his manners and disposition, of feminine superiority, so long as it is acknowledged to be such. It is indeed remarkable, that some of the noblest spirits amongst your sex have, in times antecedent to the present, distinguished themselves, by gracefully submitting to prove the duration of their love by a display of its patient durability."

"But, dear Madam, during the period of such a probation, will not the fair arbitress of one's fate, make allowance for the tortures suffered by the lover? The fears, and doubts, and terrors of a thousand things; of the chances of a fit of jealousy, or, perhaps, weariness; of events, accidents,—say, sickness,—life itself? and, in subjecting an humble and trembling slave to this ordeal, where is the tenderness, the mercy, the dovelike softness which, we know, ought to characterize the female bosom?"

"If the lover complains, Sir William," answered Miss Alice, "he ceases to be the humble and trembling admirer you at first very properly supposed him to be; if one single hour of his stipulated term be marked by selfish impatience, and accusation of his dignified mistress, he at once shows himself unworthy of her, and of the happiness she has conditionally engaged to bestow upon him; and thus, in the detection of his character, and in the exposure of his pretended passion, occurs a real good,—the opportunity for breaking up a connexion that could never lead to felicity, honourable union, and deathless attachment."—

"I pray to have thee put up in 'thrice-ribbed ice,' old lady, worlds away from this genial planet, rather than that my beloved Eliza may imbibe any portion of your nonsense!" continued Sir William, in soliloquy:—but the next words uttered by Miss Alice, put him into a more charitable humour.—

"And yet, there are circumstances, out of the general course of things, that may render indispensable, now and then, a slight interruption of the decorum, and of the gradual advance towards a definitive end, of love-proceedings."

"There are, dear Madam!" agreed the Baronet, eagerly about to state a case which he hoped would come under Miss Alice's indulgent views; "and, I think, I can demonstrate that, with regard to me, the dispensing attribute ought to be exercised."

"Favour me with your reasons, Sir William," said Miss Alice, tranquilly.

"Look at the aspect of the present times," he continued, at a venture.

"Now, indeed, you have spoken to the purpose, my dear Baronet."

"Yes!" Sir William went on, triumphing in his success, and—for the purpose of shaking to its utmost the chord of terror he saw was touched, using the most alarming language he could put together—"yes! Madam, a dreadful convulsion is at hand: a bloody extirpation of all Protestants is meditated by the Papists of the country; property, rank, distinction, society—every thing may be swept away: oh! in that coming day of anarchy, amid that hurricane of vulgar and fierce passions, Heaven help the weak and unprotected! and, above all that are doomed to stand exposed to its fury, without competent protectors—Heaven, in its mercies, take compassion on the high-born and attractive of the gentle sex!"

"Amen! dear Sir William; and, believe me, I have lately been occupied, in reference to the tender topic before us, with a full consideration of such terrible probabilities. Sir William, I am credibly informed by a lady of my acquaintance, Mrs. Whaley, the wife of Captain Whaley, of the Ballybreehoone cavalry, an active man, particularly skilled in fathoming the treacherous intentions of the disaffected, that we stand indeed upon the eve of fearful doings. By most singular sagacity and singular means, the Captain has ascertained the atrocious magnitude of one part, at least, of the appalling plot."

"Extraordinary sagacity, my dear Madam, is not required to come to even more extensive conclusions; the frightful combination of the whole peasantry is too manifest to escape observation, and they scarce take the trouble to disguise their ferocious intents towards any house of distinction—particularly such as are graced by female beauty and virtue, in different stages of attraction."

"That the wild wishes and wilder inclinations of the misguided people may take such a scope," said Miss Alicia, growing really alarmed, for she grew pale, "I am, alas! prepared to understand, Sir William. Let me entreat your attention to another of their contemplated outrages.

"It was lately observed by Captain Whaley, that, through every shop in Wexford town, all the red tape had been bought up by the peasantry, in complements of a yard and a half in length. This, naturally and properly, created a vague suspicion of its being about to be used for bad purposes. The captain personally, and by hum-

ble agents sent through the country, made the necessary inquiries. He was informed that a priest had dreamt the people were soon to be visited by a plague amongst their children; and that this plague was only to be checked by tying round the neck of every child a piece of red tape, previously blessed, as they term it, and sprinkled with holy water. But now mark, Sir William! Captain Whaley applied to the priest of whom the peasantry told this story;—the gentleman solemnly denied having authorized it, or, indeed, having before heard of it; and at length comes out the dreadful conclusion—namely, that the red tape is tied round the necks of such children as are to be distinguished and saved in the hour of the intended general slaughter of every sex and age of our persuasion. Oh! Sir William—as a young gentleman, a preacher of the gospel, though not in orders in the church, remarked to Mrs. Whaley, at her tea-table, while she told him the story—it seems like 'as the blood of the paschal lamb was to the Israelites, when the angel of the Lord slew the first-born of the Egyptians.' "

"Certainly, Madam," said Sir William, with a good affectation of horror in his countenance, "this amounts to a positive proof of the diabolical intents of these blood-thirsty people; and, therefore, I say—"

"Your pardon, Sir William; permit me to go on:"—Miss Alice was not perhaps willing to be anticipated in sagacity and foresight:—"since such terrible convulsions are to ensue, and such perils incurred by the weaker of the community in particular, I have been thinking it would be well if Miss Hartley were previously protected as effectually as is possible—"

"Dearest aunt, a thousand thanks! how good—how kind!"

"Thank me not, Sir William; nor—much as I esteem you—call me good or kind, on your own account."

"On mine, dear Madam! Could I expect it? But will you not allow me to admire the consideration—the wisdom—"

"Say necessity, Sir William, and you say all; on no other grounds but those of the most pressing necessity could my niece, Miss Hartley, or her friends for her, contemplate accepting your protection within the term first prescribed."

"Put it as you wish, dear aunt! Heaven has guided your thoughts,—and, for the purpose of leading them to this conclusion, given you the sagacity of superior years, the amiability of an angel, and the affecting tenderness of a careful and anxious parent—you know, Madam, Eliza is in heart and soul your child."

"I will argue with my brother on this subject," said Miss Alice, in a dignified manner, that saw no necessity for pausing to acknowledge well-merited compliments; "besides Sir Thomas's desire to have his child become a wife at the same age, to a day, which upon a similar occasion her mother had attained, it was

chiefly through my influence he allotted, for your very short probation, the original term of one year, Sir William."

"I know it well, absurd old lady!" muttered the tantalized lover; while, outwardly, he acknowledged the truth of the remark, by bending his head amid a profusion of smiles.

"And, I trust, I can therefore sway my brother to our altered views," continued Miss Alice; "as to Miss Hartley, I scarcely know—if one is to judge by your manner of addressing a middle-aged lady like me—a fitter advocate than yourself. Adieu! Sir William, for the present:—you will excuse me while I attend to the penning of a letter to a dear friend, which should be ready for this day's post."

"May you enjoy a long and honoured life, dearest aunt!—he arose, and tenderly saluted Miss Alice's hand—"and may its every moment be marked by the rapture I now feel!"

"Alas! Sir William," plaintively answered the good old lady, "rapture can never be mine; long since has it been a stranger to my bosom: for nothing do I now look or wish, save a continuance of the peaceful resignation that has so miraculously succeeded to excessive suffering. Yet am I able to sympathize in the happiness of the more fortunate of my species; and upon your happiness, and that of my dear child Eliza, it is with a glowing heart I pronounce my blessing."

Miss Alice paused in her advance to the door: and, during her last words, reverently laid her hand on the head of her son-in-law elect: then, half-affectedly struggling to keep down some half-natural tears, patted with sober dignity out of the room.

The Baronet, re-erecting his head from the filial position in which he had stooped it to receive the blessing, burst into a smothered laugh, and walked in ecstacy about the apartment.

"After all her nonsense," he said, "the old lady knows her duty in a love-case; fine-drawn as are her notions of female decorum, and all that, she perceives an occasional necessity for leaving people together; and, by the Mother of Love! I hear the approach of my divinity: oh! I would know her fairy step, were I blind in a desert!"

"Nay, dear aunt," said Eliza, entering at the moment, "you seem to have exercised your utmost ingenuity in hiding that rare bundle of silk. I have searched every shelf, pulled out every drawer, explored—but, bless me, Sir William, where is my aunt?"

The lover's answer we cannot authenticate; nor has the subsequent discourse, which on this occasion passed between him and his mistress, reached us in a form sufficiently original to warrant our making ourselves accountable for it to the reader. We are only prepared to state generally, that their conversation, of whatever nature it might be, lasted, without a witness, full three-quarters of an hour; about the expiration of which time, they were

observed by a third person, who, from what he saw, believed they had been "saying and doing any thing but quarrellin' among themsefs."

In fact, the drawing-room door had been left open, (an improvident neglect,) and Tim Reily, wandering idly about the house, and hearing no voices inside, softly entered a step or two, at their backs, cast his eyes around, stopped short, escaped still more softly than he had intruded, unseen, to the lobby,—his lips screwed up into the form of the letter *O*, as it is printed in italics, and one of his eyes winking, all the while that he moved backward, and when he had gained a safe distance from the drawing-room, Tim, commencing with the ejaculation for which he had kept his mouth prepared, thus soliloquized:—

"Oh—h! oh, ho! sure it's I had the loock iv a thousand! Widin the black o' my nail o' playin' the Divil, out-an'-out! His arum round about her, as close as her sash, an', murther! I'd get the thruth iv a heavy curse from the both, an' I'd disarve id', an' I'd be contented with the same. There isn't a boy undher the sun, this moment, 'ud like to be baulked worse than myself Tim Reily; an' may I never say *hec-um-pogue, a-chorra-ma-chree!** to a purty crature durin' my days agin—(an' I'd rather fast upon one male a-day than do without id)—nor she make answer 'Go along out o' that, you rogue,' (that, as all the world knows, stands for 'By all manes, a-bouchal!') may every bit o' this evil befal me, if any one ever ketches me spilin their own sport. Is id I? Tim Reily? Ah, no; not himself, by his conscience!—I'll jest give 'em nat'ral time to finish what they're whisperin' about, in the way myself 'ud finish id, when I'd ketch a hould o' Kitty Gow, supposin'; it wouldn't be three snaps iv a finger till the quarrel 'ud be over, and Kitty sayin' 'Its a shame for you, Tim!' an' I smackin' my lips. But I never had the loock iv thryin wid one o' them ladies; I b'lieve there must be more coaxin' an' takin' iv oaths that a body 'ud mane no such thing. Ah! fie, sure you wouldn't suspect I'd be so bould? Nothin' was farther from my thoughts, your darlin' ladyship! I gi' you my oath down, plump an' plain, I wouldn't do the like for the King iv England's crown."

Tim spread out his arms and assumed his most coaxing manner; while he repeated slowly and softly these last words, made a sudden stop, affected to engage in a tender contest, drew back his head, and smiled at his own sly cleverness; "an,' afther all," he continued, "little Kitty Gow has as nice a taste on her lips as any o' ye, I believe; only I wish there was honest manes o' thryin', jest out o' curiosity."

Tim was interrupted by receiving, from the hands of an unknown and strange courier, a letter for Sir William Judkin. Now

* Give me a kiss, darling of my heart.

he really had business into the drawing-room, yet he would not ungenerously hasten thither. He waited until, in his judgment, and even allowing time for the additional pleading to be used when a lady was in question, Sir William had brought matters to a conclusion.

As soon as his reason and conscience became assured on those points, Tim Reily ascended the stairs, and walked to the drawing-room door with a slow and heavy step, took the lock-handle abruptly in his grasp, and made as much noise with it as was possible; and accordingly, upon his second entrance into the apartment, had the sly satisfaction of observing that his young lady and her lover sat a reasonable distance asunder, while, from the expression of their countenances, all seemed to have ended just as it should have done.

"A bit iv a letther for your honour; an' 'There's no answer,' says the gowk that gave id."

"From whom did the messenger say it comes?" questioned Sir William.

"'How duv I know?' says he when I axed him; 'Well,' says I, 'if that's all you know about id, don't tell any body, a-bouchal;' an' so he walked off, your honour."

"Very well," resumed the young Baronet, in a low voice, as with particular scrutiny he examined the superscription of the letter. It caught Eliza's eye; she thought she recollected the handwriting, and her heart misgave her.

Asking and obtaining permission, he hastily tore open the letter. After running over its first lines, his eye widened and flashed, his brows gathered, his cheek flamed and suddenly grew very pale, and his teeth set between his widely parted lips. With increased alarm, and some terror of a peculiar kind, Eliza beheld the face that but a moment before had charmed her by its united expression of beauty and happiness, change into deformity and agitation. From the character about her lover's wrinkled brows she shrank in particular alarm; it was terrible, and, as she afterwards said, fiendish. While she continued to watch him, Sir William's features relaxed into a kind of stupor, and his manner indicated; that for a moment he forgot her presence; moisture beaded his forehead; his looks fixed on the floor; his head sank towards his chest; he seemed slightly to shudder. The letter lay open on his knee; and Eliza saw the signature she had anticipated,—that of her old lover, Harry Talbot.

A minute elapsed ere the Baronet showed symptoms of returning presence of mind.

"Dear Sir William!" said Eliza softly, "this letter seems to disturb you."

"No, my angel!" he replied, hastily folding it up, and trying to reassume his former brilliant smiles and display of happiness—"I

was only accidentally ill—ill of sudden bliss, I suppose: it contains nothing of much consequence."

"Not only of consequence, Sir William, but also of a disagreeable nature;—nay, allow my privilege of contradicting you, and hear me out. I watched your features, and their first workings, at least, were not caused by sudden illness; and I will tell you why I watched them. The handwriting and signature of the letter met my eye, and I knew them to be those of your enemy. I am therefore led to fear the most unhappy consequences: and truly loving me, as you do, you will not leave me in doubt. I must be made acquainted with the whole contents of the vile scrawl."

"You say you noticed the signature, Eliza?"

"Yes; the signature of Henry Talbot."

"Then am I compelled to do that which, under other circumstances, honour and manhood would hinder me from doing, even at your urging. Your peace of mind, adored Eliza, is at stake, and I must be candid; though after all, the matter is absurd enough. My chivalrous rival—" Sir William smiled contemptuously as he spoke the ensuing words:—"—— threatens me with his high displeasure, if I do not forego the rapture of calling the lovely Eliza Hartley my bride. I know not whence the young man has drawn his stock of ideas, but they must certainly have a knack of representing him to himself as a very vast and overpowering personage. We shall see. By the ——!—excuse me, dearest love, I forget your presence; but can I look on those heavenly features, and quite keep patience with the empty swaggerer? For such a prize as I see before me, must not my spirit start up in arms? Nay, had I no such incentive,—were I even not blessed above all men, as I am by the preference of Eliza Hartley!—his silly threat alone would prompt me to hurl this pretender to the distance his presumption warrants. The fool! the mad fool!" continued Sir William, as if muttering to himself, "does he think I fear him?"

"Sir William!" said Eliza, starting up, and laying her hand on that of her lover,—"for my sake, act nobly; take no notice of him, or of his absurd letter—absurd, your own words have acknowledged it to be; avoid him, and my gratitude will reward you."

"Eliza, I must, in this one instance, disobey you; the subject grows distressing—almost unseemly, between us; but, to give your mind certainty, I was forced into it! Since it has gone so far, however, hear me say, that I am not to be braved—bearded, with impunity! Nay, could you,—even you, Eliza, rest safely upon my protection, if I forbore to chastise this insolent outrage upon us both?"

"I will tell you, Sir William, if you abandon those fearful feelings—no, I do not say abandon; but if you now control them, at my earnest and afflicted request, you will convince me I have some little influence over you, and, if it is possible, I will love you the

better for it." Her voice trembled like the vibrating-string of a harp, and tears, those all-conquering opponents of man's sternest resolve, filled the large and heaven-blue eyes of Eliza.

"Spare me!" replied the lover, averting his head—"spare me an appeal, beloved Eliza! which, in any other case, were irresistible: do not pledge me to my own dishonour."

"Grant my request, Sir William, and at a future day you will bless me for it. Beloved Sir William—" her head rested on his shoulder, and she ended in a burst of weeping: "doom me not to days and nights of utter wretchedness!"

"The Baronet's answer did not show that Tim Reily was absolutely correct in his conclusions, as to the perfect understanding at which the lovers had arrived.

"Eliza, difficult as is the sacrifice—upon one condition, I will obey you."

"Oh! name it!"

"Be more explicit in your generally expressed consent to waive the long years of probation between me and happiness; consent to be mine at the very shortest day for which I can obtain Sir Thomas's approval. It is the only way of putting an end to contention between my rival and myself: when he sees all hope shut out, he will cease to provoke my vengeance.'"

"I will in every thing submit to my dear father's wishes."

"Then," exclaimed the enraptured lover, folding her to his bosom, "I promise you to avoid—even should he continue to annoy me—all encounter with the presumptuous and foolish Henry Talbot: nay, with this ridiculous transcript of his intemperance,"—throwing the letter into the fire,—"let all thought of my resentment vanish for ever."

"Thank God!" said Eliza; and, in the passiveness of her gratitude, she did not at once summon up sufficient presence of mind to cause her lover to qualify the ardour of his caresses.

CHAPTER XI.

A MONTH following the termination of the time of the last chapter, Sir Thomas Hartley was seated in his dining-parlour, *tête-à-tête* with a strange guest. The venerable apartment was solidly wainscoted with shillelah oak, against which (as is said of the woodwork of the roof of Westminster Abbey, also reputed Irish) the venomous spider of England, durst not affix his web. But, however true this assertion may be, the less hurtful, though not a whit more ornamental, Irish insect of the same species may, without danger to his life or health, excepting at the hands of the housemaid, (and sometimes he need not fear her either,) append his curious workmanship to any convenient beam or plank of his country's timber. Yet, let it not be inferred that, in the present instance, the venerable wainscot was disfigured by any of those filmy textures which characterise the slattern's dwelling. The domestic concerns of Sir Thomas Hartley were too diligently overlooked by Miss Alice, to allow of such a case. One glance around of her keen eye would have detected, in the most remote corner or subtle chink, the mesh of the unsightly spider, or her susceptible ear have distinguished, above all other sounds, the death-buzz of the tortured fly, expiring in the monster's claws.

The cloth had been removed after dinner, and the polished table was cheered and graced by a variety of excellent wines, for which the cellars of the host, in common with those of many Irish gentlemen of the time, were deservedly celebrated;—in truth, we do not know a country, however it has happened, more likely than our own to submit, now and then, to the smack of the connoisseur, a glass of good old claret.

The strange guest, who sat opposite to Sir Thomas Hartley, we will not pause to describe, because, though an important and memorable actor on our boards, he was but a passing one,—making a single entrance and exit, and, in conformity with the peculiar system of secrecy of those whose agent he proved himself to be, not even leaving a name behind.

Neither is it our purpose to report the whole of a long conversation which, for hours after the despatch of dinner, took place between him and Sir Thomas; or rather, which, in reply to the urging of the stranger upon a certain point, was almost monopolized by the Baronet.

It will be sufficient to take up their discourse towards its close, when, after a long and eloquent harangue from his high-minded

and warm-hearted host, explanatory of his refusal to engage in the matter, on account of which he had been specially solicited, we hear the stranger remark as follows:

"Then, Sir Thomas, it is really your intention to forsake, in their present efforts, your old political brethren."

"Certainly, Sir," replied the Baronet; "partly for the reasons I have given, partly for others which I can give. Yet, my secession does not occur without regret,—I may add, sorrow, heart-felt sorrow, for the wretched necessity that compels it. Never can I cease to wish ardently, and, I hope, purely, for the independence and happiness of my country; and that my judgment and conscience now refuse an exertion in her behalf, is a bitter pang. As a volunteer officer, in the first epoch of Ireland's glory, I was an enthusiast. Fifteen years have since sobered down my mind, and yet I see no reason to criticise my more youthful views and feelings. It was the only period, during a lapse of six centuries, that Ireland's sons, pausing in their dissentions, united for her good, and therefore seemed capable of serving her. Sir, recollection of that time fills me again with its spirit. The passion of the land was the happiness of the land; and, in the pursuit of an object so virtuous, it formed the happiness of the people. Have we for ever outlived those days of sunshine?"

"I think we have not, Sir Thomas," answered the stranger: "the coming struggle will be but the storm that breaks and disperses the clouds, to make way for a returning burst of purest sunshine."

"I despair of it, Sir," continued the Baronet.

"And yet, Sir Thomas, you say, that even at the suppression of the last of the Volunteers, your opinions and views went the full length of theirs; that, in fact, you were, in 1794, a true United Irishman?"

"I have admitted so much, Sir."

"May I then beg to be favoured, in addition to the arguments you have already adduced, with the final reasons for now regarding as hopeless, an effort you must, at that time, have thought promising?"

"Readily, Sir. At the moment when our proceedings for our country's good changed from open, public remonstrance, into more secret and disguised plans, I freely admit, I had not sufficiently reflected on ultimate results. Spirit and indignation were too much roused to allow of due forecast. Time has since been afforded me for calmer thought, and, I must own, I shrink from the cruel devastations of a civil war, even supposing it engaged in by a union amongst the majority of my countrymen, such as that exhibited by the Volunteers of 1782. I have looked at the proceedings in France, and—let stronger or baser hearts sneer at me, if they will—I shudder at the idea of stalking, even to the shrine of Freedom, through

national carnage, ruin, and demoralization. But where is the perfect union supposed? Where the spirit of 1782? Has not our previous discourse shown, that from a variety of causes—some of them the planned workings of bad men,—sect is now urged against sect, throughout our miserable land? That the struggle, stripped of all its saving character, cannot therefore be one between Ireland and England, but one between Irishmen and Irishmen—nay, between Christians and Christians, adoring the same God, though hating each other in His Name! Sir, this is a sickening, an unnerving prospect! I could not be a party in such a strife. Hand in hand with my countrymen, of every religious denomination, it is my pride and glory to have once cried out for liberty; but the generous fire of patriotism no longer warms the bosoms of Irishmen: in the present instance, their hearts flame against one another with an impure fire, kindled by a brand that has been snatched from hell."

Sir Thomas, while speaking these words, gave a proof of the strength of his feelings—tears started from his eyes.

"I trust," said his guest, "you anticipate too gloomily, Sir Thomas;—that blood must flow is inevitable; but that the efforts of the conductors of this good cause will succeed in counteracting the sectarian rancour you dread, I almost as certainly reckon on."

"I see, Sir," answered the Baronet, "you have not examined with perhaps the closeness which the case demands, the materials either of your opponents or adherents. That men of improved intellect may refrain from shedding each other's blood, on the mere score of religion, I hope and pray; but that the lower orders, on both sides, will—recollecting their long-cherished hatred, and mutual hopes of extermination or revenge—hesitate in the most atrocious as well as superfluous outrages; that Orangemen will spare Catholic, or Catholic Orangeman, I cannot, alas! contemplate as possible. And the frightful picture of their common barbarities is ever before my eyes, scaring me from all participation in your cause. Sir, I shrink from the vortex!"

"To our deep regret, Sir Thomas. But we expect at least, that, if not ranked at our side, you will stand neuter."

"Such must be my course, Sir. My single efforts could not now arrest the progress of the coming devastation: by the utmost I could do, a few wretches only might be brought to punishment,—even supposing me engaged with those whose policy in my native land I can no more admire than I can consent to join you, or rather your supporters, in whom my religion would perhaps arouse a thirst for my death. Alone, therefore, I must abide the storm as I may."

Have you ever heard, Sir Thomas, that the Cabinet of this country have, long ago, become acquainted with the secret of our confederation against them?" demanded the stranger, in visible asperity.

"I have heard as much, Sir."

"And that they since permit it to go on," continued the guest, in increasing bitterness, "while they organize and impel the very sectarian hatred you so much deprecate,—hallooing different portions of the people against each other, as one of the best means of saving themselves? And has your mind's eye, Sir Thomas, never caught a glimpse, in his closet, of the even-pulsed minister, contemplating the gradual workings of this volcano of base passions, and quietly calculating upon its explosion?—or has your fancy's ear never caught the unagitated accents of his voice, as throwing his cold eyes over the sea of blood in which our land is to be deluged, he may have said—'Let it be; for across this very tide will I sail triumphant to the harbour of my ambition?"

"I have not thought so deep, Sir."

"Well; time will show, if I wrong him. But it grows late in the evening, Sir Thomas, and I claim your promise to accompany me to the house whither my instructions farther point."

"I attend you, Sir."

And upon a dark evening, in the end of February, Sir Thomas Hartley and his guest issued forth together. The unsuspecting Baronet had better have remained at home.

CHAPTER XII.

It was for the residence of a person often mentioned before in the progress of this story, that Sir Thomas Hartley and his guest set out, on foot;—we mean, the smith of the district, John Delouchery, or, as he was familiarly termed, Shawn-a-Gow—that is, Jack the Smith.

In a country district, in Ireland, the smith is a person of no little importance. He has the credit of being an artisan, whose surprising ingenuity and well-directed blows form, into various articles necessary for agriculture, the unshapely bar of iron. He is the hamlet farrier too: he bleeds and prescribes for horses;—nay, by a very simple transmission of confidence, founded, unconsciously it may be, upon a comparison of animal economy, there appears no reason why he should not cure his neighbours as well as their beasts; and hence he may be allowed, amongst his humble friends, a rank parallel to that enjoyed, in a more exalted society, by surgeons of regular degree.

His forge enjoys almost as much consideration as himself; being

a kind of temple of fame, where the youths of the neighbourhood may, with profit to their characters, give publicity to their names. It is customary—indeed a matter insisted on, that the farmer who sends a piece of iron to be fabricated at the smithy, shall send with it a boy or lad, his son, or his most able-bodied young labourer, to wield the heavy sledge, while "the gow," with his less ponderous hammer, gives the judicious fashioning blow; and, according to his opinion of his assistant's strength of sinew, the presiding artist has it in his power to stamp, creditably or otherwise, the rising pretensions of the youth. For, however attractive to city taste may appear the mincing pace, straitened waist, and nerveless arm of the dandy, a solid tread, strong and broad muscles, and ability to work at any one thing from sunrise to sunset, and dance till sunrise again, if the opportunity turn up, are qualities regarded by less enlightened eyes, as indicative of praiseworthy manhood.

Many advantages are attached to the smith's establishment. Upon setting out in the world, when he requires a little help, his wife and children have the privilege of preceding all gleaners in the new-reaped field. At a convenient season of the year, he can call upon the farmers to supply their horses and cars to draught home fuel for his furnace. He is a friend of all good fellows, or, more properly, all good fellows are friends of his: how can he help being very often thirsty? and so, neighbours most commonly "treat him," and the dram, or draught of beer, that whizzes down his hot throat, seems a matter of right to which he inherits a claim.

His laboratory is scarce ever destitute, particularly upon winter's nights, of chatty folk, who assemble round his ever-roaring fire, partly to stretch their hands and chins over its grateful blaze, partly to indulge the gregarious and talkative instinct of their nature. Politicians, too, very often constitute such circles, by whom grievances are discussed, remedies suggested, and associations formed, that tend to break up the quiet of a whole district, and bring their wretched and ignorant promoters to the gibbet. But never, it will be presumed, at any period before or since, were the smithies of Ireland so often put in requisition as during the eventful time of our story. Under cover of the anvil's sound, which rung with the fabrication of weapons doomed to work out their desperate projects, revengeful conspirators assembled every evening, or, rather every night, to hold whispering and husky talk on the coming struggle, and shape it to their own sanguine and short-sighted policy.

Along with the consciousness of superiority conferred upon Shawn-a-Gow by his calling and rank in life, he was, by nature, one who held a high opinion of himself. His words were few; but, if they came only by intervals, Shawn thought, and others thought too, that their pith made up for their scarcity.

His stature approached the gigantic. He had a black beard, and, by virtue of his trade, a black face. His arms, when bared for working, were coils of muscle and sinew, not unworthy of the Farnese Hercules, with appended to them—for they seemed too weighty even for such arms to wield—a pair of great, broad, bony, black fists, of which it was said, that one good blow would bring to his knees the stoutest ox that ever bellowed. And the innate pride of his physical ponderosity might have assisted Shawn in standing well in his own opinion.

He was a man of substance, too, and dignity of bearing became him. From his youthful days, Shawn had been no idler, and he possessed a wife whose steady and thrifty habits turned his earnings to a good account. Between them they were proprietors of an establishment, by the agency of which his customers could treat him to his own ale or whiskey, and pay the reckoning to Mrs. Gow: and theirs was the sign of "The shoeing horse;" one very appropriate to both branches of Shawn's business. The artist, to whom we are indebted for this effort of the pencil, had studied Shawn himself as the original of the shape, which was in the act of shoeing the horse; and, while he chuckled over his work, declared it "the living image of the Gow;" none others, his wife excepted, could, however, trace the likeness: after remaining a long time silent, Shawn admitted, "it was as like him as the other thing was like a horse; an' that was saying as much as could be said for it;" and we are compelled to add, that the arms and legs seemed to originate from points a little out of natural conformation, and displayed, moreover, nothing of the herculean solidity of the real subject. As to the face, we profess no surprise at the limner's failure, in this particular, for, with equal hope of catching the features of his original, he might set about portraying the visage of a man in a mask, as attempt the delineation of Shawn's countenance, disguised as he was beneath the black crust superinduced by the smoke and vapour of his furnace.

Shawn-a-Gow had a son and daughter, and he loved both with a steady, taciturn regard, that was perhaps more sterling than if it had sounded wordily. He had been but a few days out of his apprenticeship—some thirty years ago—when on a fine Sunday, lying on his back in a meadow, and playing, as the Irish termed it, "*Bullugh lea grechan*," that is, "the breast to the sun," he began,—now that he was an established artisan, escaped from seven years' fiery ordeal, to reflect upon the steps necessary to be taken for getting on in the world.

He resolved upon matrimony, as soon as it could be attained, and, in consideration of his being a tradesman, he should get a fortune with his wife. Within twelve months at farthest, from his wedding-day, he would be the father of a son. Thirteen years afterwards, that son would be able to work in the forge, and add

to his profits the produce of the labour of an additional hand. And there would be another son, and another at least; and by the time he became fifty years old, he could subsist on their united efforts, and consecrate to luxurious ease the rest of his life. Accordingly, Shawn did marry, quite to his expectations and tastes, if not beyond them: the pretty, smiling, quiet daughter of the widow Runehan, whose public-house was of old standing, became his wife. He had speculated on a spouse that would not say no, if it happened to be his pleasure to say that "the moon was made of green cheese;" and so far Bridget Runehan fully gratified his views and wishes.

About the time he had at first reckoned on, (fortune still seeming resolved that Shawn should have his way,) his partner became a mother. He calmly awaited the result, for his mind was made up to it. A daughter was presented to him. Those who watched him, and knew Shawn's humour, deemed that he was sorely vexed; but, in consideration of its being a first offence, he said nothing.

A second *accouchement* appeared very probable. He sought a moment of serious conversation with his wife, and warned her, on pain of his displeasure, to supply him with a son. She engaged to the utmost of her power to obey her husband, but failed notwithstanding; and, as soon as she was able to bear the reasonable chastisement warranted by the law of England, it is true that Shawn reminded her of his threat.

The next time, he felt little uneasiness. Full precautions had, he argued, been taken to bring his spouse to a sense of her duty. But a daughter still appeared; and the terrified mother, in order to gain time, at least, from his indignation, counselled her nurse to misrepresent the fact. He was in great glee, called his wife "a good girl at last," and laid out extravagantly for the christening.

But when the priest came, and that the child's name was pronounced, not even the expedient of hiding it in Latin could deceive Shawn's ear. He grew furious. The mother had spoken confidentially to the clergyman, and engaged him on her side, and the good man exerted his eloquence to convince Shawn of the sinfulness of combating the will of God. All the neighbours, and particularly all the neighbours' wives, joined in the exhortation, and he was worried into an unwilling promise that, for this time, the poor woman should go unpunished. But Shawn swore an oath, in reference to future contingencies—and when they occurred, so far as he was allowed, he kept it. In fact, upon the announcement of a fourth daughter, half a dozen friends, who saw him rush into the forge for his hammer, saved him by intercepting the obstinate madman at the threshold of his wife's chamber, from the commission of some wild and perhaps dreadful act.

As if his presumption had now been sufficiently punished, Pro-

vidence, upon the next occasion, really vouchsafed him an heir, who was estimated and beloved by his father in proportion to his former anxiety and disappointments. And now his unlucky and untimely daughters died one by one, and Shawn, though not showing as much grief at their burial as he had done at their birth, still, to the surprise of his friends, seemed sorry for them.

Mrs. Gow's last confinement produced, however, a daughter still, and he took advantage of the opportunity to evince his appeased return to natural feelings, and returned the little smiling innocent with a father's answering smile:

As the boy grew up, Shawn, having acquired wealth in the world, thought it a pity to make a slavish smith of him, particularly as he gave indications of talent beyond that required to shape a horse-shoe out of a bar of iron; and, in fact, his darling was educated for the priesthood. As to his only surviving daughter, the same Kitty Gow to whom allusions have heretofore been made in these chapters, he loved her with a selfish love; was very loath to part with her; and once declared, after a fit of lengthened taciturnity, by his forge-fire, that the man destined to win and wear Kitty Gow, and her mother's purse, should be worth something, and a likely fellow into the bargain.

The reader will please to remember the name of a certain Davy Moore, "the waver, son to Molly Beehan, who was the daughter iv ould Davy Beehan, the great reed-maker;" as, in her last conference with our heroine, Nanny the Knitter described him. It will farther be borne in mind that, also according to Nanny's report, he was about to become enlisted, at his mother's instance, in the train of the suitors of pretty Kitty Gow. And accordingly, upon the evening when Sir Thomas Hartley held with his strange guest the conversation mentioned in the last chaper, Davy Moore appeared seated in the kitchen of Shawn-a-Gow, and he had come a-wooing.

Although but approximating to forty years of age, Davy looked older. He was a large unwieldy man, possessed of great latent strength, but unconscious of the fact. Neither his glance nor his bearing betrayed any self-knowledge that he was an individual whom many might fear: on the contrary, he shambled along as if afraid of every body and every thing he encountered. This arose from the continual apprehension he was in, of evil to be sustained from supernatural enemies. If his colourless face, that showed pretty nearly the dingy yellow and the unequal surface of a honeycomb, expressed any thing, and if his large, round, protruding grey eyes, ever denoted any particular state of mind, the one was nervous inanity, and the other, a mystified state of brain. His intellects, cloudy by nature, were even still more confused by vague dreams of preternatural agency. He thought—(if ever he thought)—nay, he lived rather amid the terrible bustle of imagined

beings, than among the fellow-creatures around him. Upon all subjects, excepting this one, he had not an idea. His mother, and the public too, deemed him however, a good workman; and certainly he wrought a piece of linen well; but his success was as purely mechanical as that of the apparatus, of which he might be considered as forming a part. When both were once in motion, they unconsciously got through their compound duty; but the more intellectual operation of—as it is called—"fixing his tackle in the loom," always fell to his mother; to that point of ingenuity he never reached.

And such was the wooer whom a parent's credulous partiality deemed entitled to a favourable reception from the blooming, the smart, and the wealthy Kitty Gow, or Kitty Delouchery:—wealth, as well as every thing else, is comparative, and Kitty was affluent for her sphere in life.

Davy, of course, came dressed in his best clothes; and, according to his mother's arrangement, Nanny the Knitter met him, as a necessary auxiliary, upon the field of enterprise: though, as may be recollected from a former admission of the old match-maker, a conscientious discharge of duty, proportioned to her professional fee, rather than any hope or even desire of a happy result, formed, on the present occasion, Nanny's motive of action.

Side by side, she and Davy sat on the ample kitchen "hob." A third person, not an inmate of the family, occupied a chair in the middle of the apartment. He had just driven up to the door a small cart of linen and woollen goods, and appeared to be a kind of itinerant travelling merchant, or pedlar on a grand scale. If his dress, phrase, and manner might be trusted, he was a Quaker; and one of his eyes seemed to have met with an accident, for he wore a black patch over it.

The unobtrusive and subdued-looking wife of Shawn-a-Gow, who had been so unlucky in thwarting her husband with a succession of daughters, sat behind a counter, at one side, seriously engaged in repairing her despot's hose; and Kitty, the sly, laughing Kitty, was brewing whiskey punch, from one jug to another, close to her mother's elbow, and merrily glancing, now and then, at the curious wooer Nanny had brought to seek her favour, and of whose coming the old woman had forewarned her.

The double-charactered apartment occupied by all, gave a good idea of what a comfortable man Shawn-a-gow was. As is usual in genteel Irish kitchens, a store of bacon hung in the large chimney at one end, which had, at either side, spacious hobs or stone benches, very pleasant seats upon such nights as the present. To screen this nook of comfort from the breeze of the door, which would otherwise have swept on to warm itself, a wall, about the height of a tall man, ran, at some paces from the threshold, beyond the hobs. Opposite to the fireplace was the entrance into a

room, well whitewashed and supplied with substantial long tables and forms, that had often borne, upon a Sunday, or holiday, the persons and the liquor of the village topers. Near to the door of this apartment, about a dozen steps of stairs ascended to the "loft"—which (a very unusual thing in Irish cabins) absolutely overspread the whole kitchen: and, at one side appeared another door, giving admittance into a passage that led the way to the cellar, and then to a retired room, a considerable distance from the more public parts of the house, where guests of some distinction could be accommodated, and where "the bed by night and chest of drawers by day," could be decorated for him in no uncomfortable taste.

The counter ran from the window that lighted the half-shop half-kitchen; and this window was well protected on the outside with iron bars and holdfasts of Shawn-a-Gow's best manufacture; from close observation of which, people argued there was something in the house to be guarded, exclusive of the two tills, one for copper, and one for silver, that slid in and out under the counter. Against the wall, within full view of the generally gaping door, hung a "dresser,"* holding every utensil requisite for domestic comforts, as well as for the despatch of business; amongst other articles, flat tin pans with long handles, for preparing mulled porter; tumblers of a twisted manufacture, that, by the refraction of the rays of light, seemingly cause to sparkle the liquor they contain; a few dram-glasses; pewter quarts and pints; jugs, great and small; long black bottles, cased in wicker-work to save from accident, by a fall, themselves and the precious fluid they held; and we must not forget a certain wooden instrument, with a slender handle, and a knob at the end, used in the making of punch, for speedily bruising the sugar into a state for quick solution.

And in this apartment, for lack of a better, a tired man, such as, in the hard service of our gentle readers, we occasionally have had the honour to be, might get a good, warm, homely meal, quaff a glass of good native beverage, and enjoy a cheerful blaze, and if he cared, or knew how, to chime in with his company, a cheerful hour of gossip too.

The wooer, it has been said, sat side by side with Nanny the Knitter, upon one of the "hobs," in the sheltered chimney nook. A quarter of an hour had elapsed since his entrance under the roof of the Gows, yet, excepting his "God save all here," as he crossed the threshold, no word had since escaped him. Now he would glare at the fire; now straight into Nanny's face; then at the Quaker merchant, who occupied a chair in front of the blaze; and, occasionally, more in observance of her proceedings than of herself—at Kitty Gow.

* Kitchen shelves.

"Sorrow's in him," muttered Nanny—"what a mighty purty offer he makes at the coortin: that I maytn't sin, if ever I seen afore such a cratur, wid the makins iv a man about him! He doesn't seem to be taken wid that nate little honey, forenent his eyes there, no more than if she was a stick or a stone. Here's this ould blind Quaker here, worth a dozen iv him; merry asther to me but he is!"

The Quaker, in his own peculiar fashion, had paid some passing compliments to the "comely handmaiden," as he called her, and, so far as one eye could befriend him, seemed willing to conciliate Kitty's smiles.

"Why don't you call for some liquor for yoursef?" at length said Nanny to her protégée; her patience being quite worn out.

"What's that your for sayin', Nanny?" he asked, in a voice so croaking and gurgling, that one might think it made way through numerous little cavities, like to those of the honeycomb, which his cheeks have been said to resemble.

"Call for some dhrink!" said Nanny, in a more dictatorial tone; "and make the house the betther o' you, since you won't do anything else."

"I b'lieve that 'ud be doin' right," concurred Davy; "an' by the gonnies! my mother tould me to do the same. An' wait—sure, she put a hog* in my pocket:" searching for it; "so she did, by my deed. Mrs. Delouchery, come here, I want you!"

"Wouldn't I do, Davy, a-chorra! an' never mind my mother this time?" asked Kitty, tripping over, and stooping close to him: and Davy could not avoid relaxing his features into some clumsy sympathy with the laughing face that accosted him.

"Faix, I b'lieve, honest girl, you'll do mighty well entirely; give us the worth o' this white thirteen o' dhrink; an' sure, that won't be bad for a body."

"Why, the worth o' this will make you tipsy, Davy, my boy."

"Who cares, by gonnies; an' there's another to back it, that my mother doesn't know about, your sowl."

"An' what drink will you have, Davy?"

"Give us some ale at the first settin' out, for I'm dhry."

"Verily, friend!" observed the Quaker; "the words of thy mouth bespeak the parched state of thy inner man."

"Oh! I am as dhry as a fish, by gonnies!" said the weaver, in heavy ecstacy at the anticipation of a treat he had not for a long time, nor very frequently, at any time, indulged in. Kitty brought him a foaming measure, which, at a breath, he gulped down; while she stood observing him, and awaiting his farther address.

"An' won't you sit down wid us, Kitty, my honey pet?" asked

* A shilling, English.

Nanny the Knitter, conscientiously, though reluctantly, commencing her professional duties.

"If Davy Moore was to ax a body, maybe I might, Nanny."

Davy, his out-bulged eyes staring at vacuity, was breathing after his draught, and enjoying the interior progress of the good ale.

"Why don't you have manners, Davy?" queried the Knitter captiously, "an' ax the purty pet to plank hersef near you?"

"Comely maiden," said the Quaker, "perhaps thee would'st choose a seat within enjoyment of the full bounty of the fire."

"Next to theeself is id, Sir?"

"Yea! where thee shalt be comforted."

"By word o' mouth, that 'ud make a body understand thee?" slily looking her meaning.

"Verily, by the persuasion of lips will I instruct thee!" and the man's lips seemed to quiver, and his unpatched eye to glitter in anticipation.

"An' thee'd give me a ribbon, I'll go bail?"

"Even the choicest of my assortment."

"Sure, I know that, Sir; an' a handkerchief of raal Barcelony?"

"The best of the bale, likewise."

Kitty laughed jeeringly, and replied, "For all your thee's and thou's, friend, I b'lieve you're a big rogue among the poor girls: 'smooth wather runs deep;'—you know the rest yoursef. But here's honest Davy Moore doesn't fear that ould sayin'."

Davy had just capsized his vessel; and, in order to drain the last drop, was presenting its nadir point to the zenith. "Give us another o' the full o' this, a-lanna!"

Kitty speedily served him; and, as she turned to withdraw,

"Come here, honest girl!" he continued; "mysef wants to be spakin' to you."

"An' here I am for you, Davy," she answered, sitting down in great glee, "an' now, say id to my face, whatever it is."

"**Cugger, cugger, a-lanna*; sure my mother lets me come from the work, on the head o' coortin' you."

"An' a brave hand you're at the coortin', I'll go bail, Davy."

"You're a clane pet iv a darlin'," observed Davy, with much of the air of an automaton that could speak: and Kitty smiled as she recognized the phrase of Nanny the Knitter, who, no doubt, adept as she was in soft words, had schooled Davy for the present occasion.

"It's the liquor you're flattherin now, Davy; that's as plain as the fire afore us."

"No, bud it's your own purty sef he manes," put in Nanny the Knitter, in order to give her pupil time to recover from his second

* Whisper, my dear.

draught. "An' wouldn't he be a goose, an' a gandher, that's worse, to talk that a-way to muddy barley-wather, wid the comely, nice Kitty Gow, by the side iv him, that 'ud make a toothless grandaddy dance a double hornpipe to plaise her."

"Only it seemeth unto me," observed the Quaker, "that the elder woman is the suitor, rather than my worthy brother in warp and weft."

Kitty laughed, and Nanny replied sharply,

"Meddlin' people doesn't always come off wid thanks, Sir; an' let you go poke your fox's snout where there's geese that won't know you, my honey."

"Peace be between us, good mother," answered the Quaker meekly.

"Well; keep givin' your one eye to your own concarns, sir, an' we'll have no rubbins wid any o' your sort:" and Nanny glanced a meaning over his quaintly attired person.

"You're my honey pet iv a darlin', I tell you, Kitty Delouchery," resumed Davy, when he had recovered his breath; an' I want to be coaxin' you, the way you'll be marred to mysef, this Shroft."

"Throth, Davy," answered Kitty, "an' sure you're in haste, good boy: it isn't every one 'ud have me that way, without lookin' closer; maybe you wouldn't like me as well by Asther-Sunday as you would on Shrofe-Tuesday; an' then you couldn't get rid o' me so asy."

"But, lo!" said the Quaker, "I would yearn to befriend honest Davy: if thy way and his way lay separate, behold I would come up with thee upon thine, fair Kitty, and thou shouldst find in me a cherisher, even one to cleave unto thee."

Kitty affected not to hear this speech, but Nanny was severe upon it.

"Bad manners to you, I say—an' that prayer was hard for you afore, bud—merry asther to me, if you war lookin' at the way your bad words agrees wid your ugly face, an' the simple dhress that's on your rogue's skin, you'd hate a pretendher—becase he comes o' the worst o' people."

"Not to the elder have my words been spoken," said the man: "wherefore, I say again, let not wrath come between us."

"To me?" queried Nanny, in a shrill tone; "*That* for you!" and she dipped the top of her finger in a glass of ale Davy had given her, and held out a drop to the Quaker's view—"that for you, an' for all o' your sort!"

"An' tell me, Davy," interrupted Kitty, "who put you upon coortin me in such a hurry."

"My mother it was that put me on it," answered the suitor; "she tould me to come over when the piece was worked; an' she made me dhress myself in my grogram-grey an' all: an', by gonnies, coortin is plaisin enough," looking affectionately at the pewter pot

—"an' my mother 'ill larn you to fix the tackle in the loom, Kitty, so she will."

"There's good arnin o' the money there," observed Nanny, speaking in a low tone, to avoid the Quaker's observation—"good arnin o' the money, every day in the year; an' there's the good acres that goes wid the house—an' ould take; and ready tilled, an' the crop lookin' well; an' there's the cow in calf."

"An' my mother," added Davy, in obedience to a hint from Nanny's elbow, "has, I don't know how mooch, in a stockin', Kitty, an' she'll powr id into your lap."

"I'm tould, for a thruth, Davy, that the cow is bewitched?" remarked Kitty, keeping a very serious face.

"Oh-a! oh-a!" ejaculated Davy—"An' I tied the red rag to her tail, the day she came to us, becase the other cow was overlooked to a sart'nty."

"It's no sich thing, Kitty my honey," said the Knitter; "I seen her wid my own eyes, an' she's thrivin' to look at."

"But you couldn't know by lookin' at her, Nanny; an' them that tould me has the knowledge. An', morebetoken, Davy, tell me one thing; when were you in Sculloch-Gap?"

"Oh-a! I was a comin' through id last Sunday week, Kitty."

"An' did you meet any thing on your way?"

"Oh-a! did I? an' sure I did! There was throops o' them comin' over my path, an' they war knittin' the grass afore me, to throw me; bud there was one o' them, a little ould woman like, an' she was loosenin' the knots, to get me off, an' let me go."

"I knew all that afore, Davy."

"Oh-a! how?—oh-a—"

"An' the same body that tould me o' your cow bein' bewitched, tould me into the bargain, that the little ould woman you met in Sculloch-Gap untwisted the grass for you, becase she loves an' likes you, an' has an eye on you for hersef; an' she'd rune any one that 'ud be goin' inside of her, wid you! Bud, here's the very body that tould me all, now crassin the thrashold, an' don't purtend I spoke to you about id, for your life, Davy."

Nanny did not listen and look on without her usual discrimination. She perceived that Kitty Gow was indulging, at the expense of the credulous Davy Moore, in her usual pleasant bantering, and Nanny's former bad omen of the result of the matrimonial treaty became confirmed; but, to protect her own interests, she did not fail to remind Davy, in a whisper, that he was bound to testify at home, how faithfully and cleverly she had abetted his cause.

The person who now entered has before been presented to the reader. It was no other than the redoubted Rattling Bill: dice-thrower, conjuror, fortune-teller, surgeon, and so forth. With all the sarciness which distinguished his mien and features, he swaggered into the kitchen, and stood an instant in the middle of the

floor. His position had scarcely been assumed, when from a hurdle of twisted osiers, in a corner between the door jamb and the screen wall, that formed a roost for some of the domestic fowl, a tiny imperfect crow was heard, like that of a juvenile cock just beginning to acquire his note of authority over his harem.

Bill started a little, bent a severe eye upon the hurdle, and growlingly addressed the dame of the house, who, yet seated behind her counter, seemed devoting the whole powers of her mind to the repairs of her husband's hose; and, perhaps, she had good reason for strict attention to the wants and comforts of the moody Shawn-a-Gow.

"I say, misthress, twist the head iv that hen that's afther crowin', if you'd have loock in the house; an', the duoul take her carcass, when the head's off, that could'nt let me pass her civilly! or, get you up, out o' that, ould Nanny, an' go help to do the job."

"By all manes, my honey," said Nanny, with much alacrity; "an why not—if the sate was the best in the world, an' pour Nanny the owner."

"So you've come a coortin, Davy Moore," continued Bill, addressing the disconcerted weaver, who, from the moment the conjuror appeared, had looked frightened, but was quite petrified with the supernatural crowing of the hen; "an' it's to Kitty Gow you're come; an' *you* won't have him, Kitty; *dhar-a-loursa*,* an' that's well for you! Davy is bespoke by another; an' if you said 'yes,' she'd turn your mouth up to your ear, in no time."

Kitty looked truly surprised. At the expense of her curious lover, she had invented the story of the old fairy's *penchant* for him; her assertion that Rattling Bill told it to her, was a bounce; yet, now the conjuror's allusions seemed to drift the same way, and his ensuing words startled her still more.

"Yes; poor Davy Moore must marry wid the fairies o' Sculloch-Gap: there is one of them called Moya Creetha, becase she has a hump on her back, that must have him; an' that will never let him go till she withers the marrow in his bones:—what d' you say to that, Davy?"

"Oh-a! what 'll I do, what 'll I do!"

"Make a friend o' one that's able to save you. Is there any thing in this quart?"

"Oh-a! not a dhrop."

"Pull out your money, an' fill it, then."

"Oh-a! I gave the one shillin' my mother put in my pocket to the honest girl there!"

"Now—'nations to you, you *bosthoon!* Where's the other shillin' you thieved out o' the blue cup in the cupboard?"

"Murther!—yes—it's a sart'n thruth I done it."

* By the book.

"Well, out wid it!"—Davy, moaning in fright, put the shilling into Bill's hand.

"Here, Kitty, give us the worth o' this, in smokin' punch, by the Piper! Sarv'nt kindly, sir," turning to the Quaker, who, with his single eye, had been very inquisitively studying Bill.

"Now, you think I'm a quare sort of a fellow—an' so I am; but you don't know what the duoul I'm about."

"Friend, it concerneth not me to know."

"Well; I have the advantage o' you, then; an' seldom I haven't o' the neighbours, one with another, to tell the thruth:" he lowered his voice, and stooped to the Quaker:—"tip us your fist!" He took rather than received the man's hand, held it in his own left hand, closed the fingers and extended the thumb of his right, and then chucked it at the point where both form an angle, against the answering point in the hand of the stranger. "Isn't that the righ touch?" he continued, as still continuing the contact, he might be observed gently to scrape his little finger against the other's palm:—"isn't id? But no matther, now—sure I know nothin' about it, if you like. Never fear me! I'm thrue to the back-bone; may —— ——" (he uttered a tremendous imprecation,)—"if I'm not!"

"Friend, I nothing understand thee," said the seemingly astonished Quaker.

"Phoo! phoo! never mind, man; there is a time for knowin', an' a time for keepin' the winkers on."

"Is that hen killed?" he asked Nanny, who was whispering with Mrs. Delouchery.

"It's past our skill, my dear sowl, to till which iv 'em crowed at you," said the dame.

"Haven't you a bracket hen among 'em?"

"Why, then, faix we have!" answered the dame, looking at Nanny, who, in reply, elevated the knobs of flesh that supplied the place of eyebrows, above her almost whitish eyes.

"Well, let me at her, an' I'll soon put her from crowin' again, the next time she sees me."

"Jack Delouchery 'ill be bringin' me to the fore about it, when he misses the hen," said the dame, in an alarmed accent; while Nanny, mounting on a stool, pulled down the screaming offender.

"Would he dare be fraptious about id? Give her here, ould Nanny, an' lave the job to me." He seized the hen, made some motions in display of the deed he was about to commit, and instantly presented his victim without a head, while blood trickled from her neck.

"Now she's done for! But when the head's off, an' the bad blood spilt, that's enough; an' so, misthress, to keep quiet, as well as loock, in the house,—here—here's your bracket hen, safe

an' sound again;" and flinging the same bird on the floor, she appeared re-endowed with her head, and stalked and stared about, as if she had just returned from the other world.

There was a general shudder amongst the spectators, the Quaker excepted, who still kept his good eye upon Bill's motions. Davy Moore groaned aloud, and with looks of stolid terror glared upon the hen, as she continued to mope about, stretching her neck, and peering at every thing, so much after the fashion of a stranger to the house, that it was firmly concluded, either that she had got a new head,-to which the objects around were naturally unknown, or was but a receptacle for something bad, thus hellishly introduced into the family.

"Put her on the roost," cried Bill; but no one ventured to obey him. On the contrary, whenever the animal approached them, Nanny, Mrs. Delouchery, and Kitty, edged off to the opposite side of the apartment,—and Davy almost cringed into the fire from her.

"Hah! hah!" laughed Bill, "you're a purty set o' cowards. Come here, you jade!" The hen, acknowledging his acquaintanceship and control, strode towards him like a familiar. He took her up, and, seemingly whispering a word or two at her ear, placed her on the roost, where for some time a great uproar ensued, as if its other tenants felt averse to the intrusion of a stranger visitant. "The ginger," and "the black curvickeen," pecked furiously at the bracket, but she as furiously returned their assaults, and was soon the victor, causing them to poke down their heads and keep silent. And then, elated with her conquest, she stood up on her perch, clapped her wings, and all expected another crow, when—

"Do, if you daare!" cried Bill; and, cackling gently, she settled herself for repose.

"Divil a purtier hand, or a comelier colleen, havin' that same hand to her shoulder, ever said *thage egh*, wid a matther o' whiskey punch!"—he went on, re-seating himself close by Davy, on the hob, as he took the smoking jug from Kitty, and placed a glass for his entertainer; "an' I won't be the worse friend o' yours, Davy Moore," Bill continued, "for havin' this undher my belt; *shadhurth*, man! the same to your neighbour," nodding to the Quaker; "Mistress Delouchery, here is your health; Kitty, you darlin', if it's a thing you're set upon, havin' Davy Moore, I'll pull him from little Moga Creetha for you; "I care no more for all the *Sheeogs* in Sculloch-Gap than I do for a uran's sneeze—an' well they know that!"—and he swallowed his glass of punch: but the action scarce interrupted his brawling volubility.

"Hould your glass, Davy."

"Dhrink it all, yoursef, an' a thousand welcomes."

"Phoo, man! hould here, I tell you"—snatching the glass—

"that will do:—maybe your reverence wid the big hat 'ud try a *gawlogue?*"*

"Friend, I thirst not, and therefore choose to say nay to thy bounty."

"By the Piper! you might choose worse, then; sich a thing as a could lodgin' an' a hemp cravat, if Captin Whaley an' his yeomen had other people's knowledge: bud, to the duoul wid him an' them;—an' it's not that I mane, sir; bud, in your country, they're given to oaten-maal broth, afther the fashion o' the starved Scotch rawbones they come from. No offence, sir—mind, I'm not spakin to you at all, if you'd rather o' the two I wouldn't."

We did not at first mention that the Quaker had that peculiar harshness of accent which to Southern Irish ears denotes a native of Protestant Ulster.

"Here's a toast for you—an' my heavy curse on whoever wouldn't send it down—here's Erin-go-bragh, every day she gets up!—Davy, the liquor is making me love you more an' more;" he continued, in a confidential under-tone to his terrified neighbour, clutching him by the knee, and leaning across him—"don't you think you see afore you the boy that's able to stand up for you, if Poll Moore, the mother, 'ill show us the inside o' the stockin'?"

"Oh-a," answered Davy, "my life is in your hands."

"Well! never fear bud I'll bring you over id; only be said by me."

At this moment, Sir Thomas Hartley and the mysterious guest in whose company we have seen him issue forth from Hartley Court, entered Shawn-a-Gow's kitchen, attended by our humble acquaintance, Tim Reily. The Quaker arose as they appeared, and Rattling Bill caught a look of recognition between him and Sir Thomas's stranger guest; after which, he stooped for a small portmanteau that had lain on the floor, by his side, and passed out of the apartment by the door we have mentioned as leading to a more remote and private room of the house.

"This is the abode you seek," said the Baronet, speaking low to his companion: "from the conversation which has passed between us, you fully know my sentiments, and must infer that I cannot consider myself free to share secrets, where I decline to be an adherent. My servant attends you, and I will not retire to rest till you return safely to Hartley Court."

"Sir Thomas," answered the stranger, "I feel not the smallest doubt of your honour, so far as I have given you our confidence; I only regret that we cannot have the support of a gentleman so influential, and so deservedly revered. Yet, think more, and closer, on the part you will take. Characters such as your's are those we anxiously desire to name amongst us;—men whose opinions must,

* A guzzle.

even in a physical sense, reach far, and who would also be able to wield and restrain the fury of a revengeful populace. But this is no place, and no time, to confer on such topics. Nor will I trespass on you to await my return at Hartley Court. Your servant's attendance will be quite sufficient; as, in truth, I shall only require my horse, after this business, to push on, under cover of night, upon my prescribed route. Farewell, Sir Thomas Hartley; here we separate, with acknowledgments, on my part, of high respect for your person, and gratitude for the kindly hospitality of your mansion."

They shook hands, and separated accordingly; the stranger thoughtfully walking across the floor, without glancing at either side, and then entering the passage through which the Quaker had disappeared.

CHAPTER XIII.

In the confidential apartment of the rustic tavern, the Quaker, his broad-brimmed hat doffed, was already seated at a deal-table. All our purposes are served by remarking, that five out of the six seemed of the class of Irish gentlemen farmers; were respectably attired in top-boots, and in cloth of good texture, soberly varied in hue, according to the taste of each wearer; and had impressed upon them the look and air of good living, of easy circumstances, and of long intercourse in a rank of life aptly termed decent, and sometimes genteel, according to the relative rank of the individuals who make the comment.

These five conspirators are doomed to pass away from our view as soon as the chapter closes; but with the sixth, exclusive of the Quaker, we shall have some continued encounters; and he is, therefore, entitled to more particular notice.

Indeed, even his remarkable contrast with his companions might of itself require our description. He was a very little man, not more than four feet six inches in height; with, upon his head, a curious species of full-bottomed wig, deriving its name from a great truss of goat's hair, frizzed out, with much care and labour, into a round, hard mass, that rested upon the coat-collar; and, in turn, allowed to rest upon it, at four inches from its under-edge, the hat of its wearer. His coat was good broad-cloth, of that colour termed "pepper-and-salt," single-breasted, with a gradually sloping cut backwards from the breast, and terminating in long, heavy

skirts, showing mitred pocket-flaps, that reached (nor difficultly, had they been shorter) to the middle of his legs; and this coat was emblazoned with real silver buttons, each the size of half-a-crown, having engraved upon them the initials "P. R." for Peter Rooney; and for the last thirty years they had adorned in succession all his Sunday coats. His waistcoat was red, curiously wrought with elaborate silk flourishes along the front edges, and around the pockets, and the borders of the ample flaps. A thickset small-clothes, so made as (pretty well) to keep its place without the new-fangled aid of braces, had mother-of-pearl buttons at the knees, was tightly-clasped round his hams with silver buckles, and showed to perfection, through his blay-thread hose, a well turned though tiny leg; yet retaining, after fifty years' service, its muscular plumpness.

Peter Rooney, naturally grave, had a sagacious and self-respecting look; not that owlish cast of countenance that, as Bacon says, would 'seem wise,' but one that, although sedate, and often proud, bespoke reflection and intelligence, creditable to his state in life and opportunities for acquirement.

The person who had parted from Sir Thomas Hartley entered: all stood up; and their salutes and manner evidently acknowledged a superior; yet he shook hands all round, carelessly or naturally, it might be deemed by a looker-on; but under the accost of good-fellowship was secretly interchanged with each, the same signal of intelligence, and of political recognition, which Rattling Bill had proffered to the seeming Quaker; and it was that individual who, having laid aside his green patch, first addressed the meeting; upon which occasion, both his eyes appeared equally keen and speculative, and his accent, too, sounded more distinctly northern than when he had modified it by the over-done smoothness of the Quaker's phrase and intonation: "This, my good friends! is the gentleman without a name; to meet whom I empowered Peter Rooney to summon you together."

"And I come amongst you, gentlemen, despatched by those higher in trust than I am,—of whose names I know and ask to know as little as you do of mine,—to ascertain, from respectable and sensible persons, the progress the cause has made since the last hints, or orders, in your neighbourhood. All of you, gentlemen, have been sworn in, in Dublin?"

"All, sir, at different times," answered one of the gentlemen farmers, "by the Committee at 72, Stephen's-Green, of whom Mr. Mac Nevitt was one, when business took us up to town."

The ex-Quaker nodded assent.

"We understand each other then," resumed the important visitor. Through our friend, Mr. Mac Nevitt, my claims on your confidence are fully proved, and my reliance and trust in you also established.

So, to business: and, to commence regularly, let us consult the map of the country."

"You'll plaise, sir," said little Peter Rooney, sedately, "to hould in your mind, that the present, I may call it Upper-baronial, though it's not, all out, of accord with the system follied in other parts, farther North—is held on this side o' the Slaney river."

"I understand you, Mr. Rooney; you style this, after our approved plan, an Upper-baronial meeting."

"Yes, sir; in regard of the dacency that's in id."

"And by this side of the Slaney, you mean, of course, the east side."

"The exact thing, sir; we're now sittin' in Upper-baronial, in the County Waxford, on the ground that's to the east o' the Slaney wather."

"And a very necessary piece of information that is, Mr. Rooney."

"An' for rason o' that, sir, I spoke the word; I was never given to be loquacious to no purpose! Will you set your eye upon thravellin', sir, from Benclody, sir, the town that you ought to see about two miles, or thereaway, to the head o' where this Upper-baronial is houldin' its sittin', an' then, down again to ould Ross, an' from Benclody (which is called, more-betoken, Newtown Barry, by raison its landlord is a Curnel o' that name, as bitther a foe to liberty an' poor Ireland, as ever tuck the book to swear allegiance to King George). I wish you'd hould it in your mind, sir, to have his lands, an' his goods, an' his chattels, confishcated back again to the right owners, when the three o' liberty is flourishin' in our counthry."

The stranger smiled at Peter's hint, and observed in reply, "Men will change with measures, Mr. Rooney."

"I'm without sense, sir, if Curnel Barry 'ill be one of them men. I had a dalin' with him, oncet, in the way o' my thrade; I made a breeches for him. By a chance it cum about; as I'll explain clear to you, sir!"

"Peter," interrupted the ex-Quaker, "keep to the point; there is no spare time for gossip."

'Misther Mac Nevitt," replied the little tailor, "a talker o' gossip isn't the name I go by; but you spake sense, in the other part o' your sayin': an' so, sir, I'll only tell you, as a piece o' news worth knowin', that Curnel Barry 'ud ate a Catholic iv Good Friday, and ax no sauce to his mate."

"But, Mr. Rooney," said the stranger, "you were about to supply some account of the progress of the Union between Benclody, Newtown-Barry, and Old Ross, if I remember."

"If Pether would give us as good measure back again in the coats an' breeches, (when he gets good measure, an' that's always,) as he does of his speech, he'd be an honest tailor," remarked one of the deliberators.

"I'll uphold Pether Rooney to be a thradesman with a conscience," said another; "I say he's too honest; he sent me home a coat that would cover three like me."

"I'll engage he had a yard to spare, for all that," remarked a third.

There were some signs of perturbation about Peter, as these comments occurred, particularly manifested by his seizing both "lugs" of his wig, and giving it a forcible drag forward. But Mr. Mac Nevitt, besides that this southern habit of mixing up humour with business did not suit his notions of propriety, wished to appease the little man's wrath.

"My good friends," he said, "I think, with all respect to you, that you are inclined to be facetious out of time; and, what is more, you interrupt the official report of Mr. Peter Rooney, whom I have always found intelligent, and able to convey, clearly, any explanation he proposes to give."

"Misther Mac Nevitt," answered Peter, "I'm behoulden to you for your good opinion." He smoothed down, with both hands, the sleek crown of his wig, which, in contradistinction to dragging it by the "lugs," denoted placidity and satisfaction. "These gentlemen are only a little funny; bud I seen people, many times in my life, that were the born images o' geese, in more ways than one; there's some that's like the goose I have at home, myself, flat an' heavy, with no life nor hait, barrin' its put into 'em by one that has the sense they want; an' show me the man 'ud do that, for a goose o' the kind, as well as Pether Rooney? an' then there's others o' them like grey geese you'd see swimmin', because they gabble just the same way, an' always as loud, whether they're atin' or drinkin', merry or sad, doin' nothin', or havin' somethin' to do."

This studied retort was characteristic of Peter; containing something to the purpose, but disguised in a lugubrious mode of speech.

"And now, gentlemen all," resumed Mr. Mac Nevitt, "since you stand on equal terms of word for word, let us attend to business."

"Did you run over wid your eye, sir," asked Peter of the stranger, "along the map in your hand, the ground from Benclody to Ould Ross?"

"I have, indeed, done so."

"An' a brisk thraveller you are, sir; 'twould be a great matther if a body could keep us with you on a journey. Well, sir, it's good fifteen Irish miles from Benclody to Ould Ross; from the side o' the Slaney, acrass to the foot o' Mount Leinsther, by the very spot where the Upper-baronial is now sittin', is two, or there away; in the middle, from Enniscorthy to the Black Stairs, is again nigh-hand to noin an' a half; an' at the bottom, from the

river, by Ould Ross lackin hill, New Ross is about twelve an' a half again: an' I'm tellin' this to show I know every yard o' the ground well; an' no thanks to me for the same. I tuck my kit, an' I went thravellin' for work, sir, once that road; not that I wanted more than I'd find every day in the year, on the shopboard at home,—from the best o' customers, too;—but what's a man at all, if he doesn't give up gains for his counthry? And so, sir, I called at one house an' another, up an' down, an' was welcome in all places, because I'm no sich workman as them that's nothin' but needle-carriers: a man gets a name in his callin' when he earns money by id!

"Well! While I was on my thravels, I done my endayvour. I swore in as many as I could get to undherstand the nath'r o' the thing, an' that's a good number. And I larn sence, they're swearin' in others; an' them others more again;—an' so on: but it isn't so asy to break the crath'rs o' the way they have o' goin' out in the night, an' doin' harm without doin' good; an' they wouldn't listen to us, nor care about us at all, only for fear o' what's to come on 'em."

"Is the system of the Union observed at the initiation of your friends, Mr. Rooney?"

"Not much, sir, I'm sorry to say. They're too well watched for it, an', morebetoken, 'ud as lieve follv the fashion they're used to in their Defendher line. I'll tell you the way it's brought about among 'em. Myself, supposin', comes acrass a friend, as we think, an' we begin by talkin' over the times, an' the slaughther of all Catholics that's surely to be; an' may be, I ax him, or he axes me, didn't he or didn't I hear o' the plan for havin' the people ready to stand out against the murdhering Orangemen. Maybe he'll say 'Yes,' maybe 'No:' then I'll make id plain—a matther asily done: there's nothin' else for id; an' furthermore, I'll show him the way we'll scourge them bloody dogs out iv our land, at the same time that we hender them from killin' us; an' he b'lieves every word I say,—no praise to him for the same;—an' I whips out my book, an' makes a man of him, an' gives him the sign; an' he talks to a friend about id, an' makes a man of him too; an' they go and get pikes made, an' hide 'em till the time comes."

"Peter Rooney has given a very good account of the state of the counthry in these parts," remarked one of the farmers, who had not before addressed the meeting.

"I'll go bail I have," said Peter, smoothing his wig.

"And his words," resumed the speaker, "will hold good for nearly the whole of the county. This half year back, I was goin' about, from one fair to another, almost thro' the whole of the County Wexford, an' I made it part o' my business to ask afther the progress the cause had lately made in different baronies, an' hamlets, an' villages; an', as Peter says, that I learned."

"There's a little more to be said," observed another farmer: "when a knowledgable person is in a public-house, he minds, by the talk that's going on, what folks are round him, an' he lays down the plan o' the Committee in Dublin, an' the strangers an' himself 'ill be sworn brothers before they part."

"No regular meetings, I perceive?" inquired the agent.

"I don't know of a single one, the same that was pointed out to us when I was sworn in Stephen's-Green, in all the County Wexford,—except in the town of Wexford itself, may be,—where there's district committees an' parochial committees; but this you may depend on, sir, the people are ready enough, an' no wondher they should."

"Well, gentlemen! more method and system would be requisite to produce the organization necessary for full success; yet, as you are so closely observed, and as matters now hasten to a crisis, I can only advise that, by all means available, you go on swearing in as many as you can; let us, at least, have the physical power of the country in a state of preparation. One part of the statements made I wish to observe upon. It is a mistake that every Protestant is an Orangeman, or an enemy to Roman Catholics. On the contrary, the originators of our confederacy were to a man Protestants; its present heads are chiefly Protestants; its principal agents, too—for instance, I am a Protestant, myself. And, indeed, what means our title 'United Irishmen,' if it does not describe a combination of every sect for our country's good? You are almost exclusively Catholics here in the South; merely, because you form the bulk of the population."

"A word or two from me," said the person who had begun the attack on Peter Rooney; "There's no use in thrying to persuade ourselves, or the poor people round us, that the Protestants of Wexford are our friends. Aren't all the Orangemen Protestants? And haven't all the Protestants, here, firelocks in their hands, swearing our downfal? Let me whisper this too, in your ear, Sir;—the Wexford boys would never turn out against ould King George, if they didn't see that ould King George was going to let them be slauthered with them same Orange firelocks."

"That's gospel truth," remarked another; "the people o' this county are industhrous, an' 'ud rather mind their work, if they thought they'd be let to mind it."

"An' there's one thing," said Peter Rooney. "When it comes to pass that the Waxford boys oncet stands up for Ireland an' Liberty; they that will conquer over 'em won't have childer's play."

"Right, Padrhe," he was answered; "an' a stouter cock of your inches, doesn't sthrut upon Wexford ground this moment!"

"But we have a dhry meeting of it," observed another; "we must do good to Shawn-a-Gow's house, as well as to the counthry."

He rang a hand-bell. Kitty tripped in, and as she passed the ex-Quaker, whispered, "Why, then, you done well, Sir, to take off the patch; it was a pity to have such a shiner undher a cloud."

Ere he could answer she had tripped out again, to attend to her orders; but when she came back with the liquor, he whispered, in turn, "Sly Kitty! you must have the ribbon and the Barcelony without farther payment than keeping a secret."

"I'll do that," she answered, "without ribbon or Barcelony handkerchief."

"I believe you. But, tell me, has that impudent fellow left the kitchen?"

"Just rise your new eye, an' the ould one along with it, that's as good as new,—without risin' your head, sir,—to the winder."

He did as Kitty directed him, and the face of Rattling Bill appeared for an instant at the glass.

"How got he there, Kitty?"

"Through the cabbage-garden." She withdrew.

"Does any one know, resumed Mr. Mac Nevitt aloud, "a juggling fellow whom I met abroad in the kitchen?"

"You mane Rattlin' Bill Nale, sir," answered Peter Rooney; "a useful boy he is: swearin' in more o' the Waxford army o' freedom than any ten of us."

"I feared he had the aspect of a spy when he gave me the sign; but since he is thus answered for, I can fear nothing. Yet, Peter my friend, be on your guard! There are many mean and base adventurers going about in the same way, only to fill their pouches with blood-money."

Peter again answered for his colleague; and now leaving this, as the little tailor called it, "Upper-baronial," to complete its sitting, how and when it chooses, we propose, after a single glance into the kitchen, to follow Bill Nale through others of his movements.

Tim Reily, in consequence of his master's instructions to wait upon the stranger returning to Shawn-a-Gow's, after he had seen Sir Thomas safe at home, checked his bounding step outside the kitchen-door, and stole safely through it.

"She doesn't see the laste taste o' me," he soliloquized, advancing still cautiously to the spot where, having just turned her back to the door, Kitty stood by her mother's side, busily employed in doing something that it would have been no great waste of time if she had left undone. Indeed, to let the reader into a secret, (which we do, as some recompense for his patience regarding other secrets not yet revealable,) Tim Reily was Kitty's most approved sweetheart. He was a man after her own mind; gay, good-humoured, good-natured, and frolicsome, and some personal affinity also existed between them; for if Kitty was a pretty girl, Tim was a "clane, clever boy," in the estimation, at least, of her hazel eyes.

"No," continued Tim, as he stole nearer, "she doesn't know a bit, I'm comin' close on her—not she!" and whether he was right or wrong in ironically attributing this piece of coquetry, Kitty, when he laid his hand on her shoulder, gave a lively little start; but she did not scream, for good reasons; there were others to hear, besides Tim.

"Kitty, my *cuishla*, is it frightened at me you are?"

"Yes—an' no wondher for me!"

"But is your heart batin', a chorra?"

"Be quiet—you won't find out, this time."

"Well, there's no use in talkin'; I'll b'lieve in dhrames the longest day I live,—if I dhrame any thing the night afore."

"An' may be you'd tell us why?"

"Becase my last dhrame is out, the present time. I dhreamt, last night, Kitty, you were wantin' to kiss me, an' I wouldn't let you."

"An' that was a very impident dhrame for you, I'd have you to know."

"Did you never hear, cuishla ma-chree, that dhrames went by conthraries?"

"No:—an' I don't want to hear it now."

"Why, then, that's the way you ought to read 'em, Kitty, b'lieve me; becase, if 'twas a thing you dhramed, *I* was kissin' *you*—"

"I'll never dhrame the like."

"But, in case it so happened, an' more unlikely dhrames come to pass in a body's sleep,—many's the time,—the thruth 'ud be, that 'tis *you* 'ud be kissin' *me*."

"Go along out o' that, wid your talk."

"But as it turns up that I had a dhrame that *you* were kissin' *me*, why, to go by conthraries, it's *I* must kiss *you!*" The last words were an interrupted mumble, so quickly did the act illustrate their theory; "and there, now, ma colleen—an' sure it's no great matther, afther all, which o' the two had the dhrame, for it turns out much the same in the long run."

"This is given as a specimen of the manner in which Tim Reily carried on his courtship; but, as we have more serious business in hand, no farther space must be occupied by illustrations of the mode of "coortin' in the counthry," as we remember to have heard it defined. We take a final leave of Shawn-a-Gow's kitchen, for the purpose of visiting Shawn-a-Gow's forge; only remarking, at our exit, that Tim Reily made good use of the time he was obliged to spend in waiting to escort the stranger; and that,—with the Knitter retired to a neutral distance, and Davy Moore, exhibiting not the least sign of jealousy, as, wholly occupied with the fate to which his desirable person seemed exposed, he sat opposite to the couple,—Tim's arm was, during the course of the night, seen en-

compassing Kitty's waist, while he hummed into her complimented ears the last effusion of his muse.

"As I rambled a walkin' one mornin' in May,
I spied a fair maiden a-passin' that way;
The sun he was shinin' so bright an' so clear,
And the birds they were singin', most pleasant to hear;
But the sight to *my* eyes more pleasant, *a-chany*,*
Was Kitty Delouchery, the pride of the Slany!

There was flowers an' posies a-growin' all round,
There was daisies and cowslips that cover'd the ground,
There was daffydowndillies so hansome to see,
An' sweet smellin' primroses undher the three;
But my *cuishla* came by, an' none blossom'd so gaily,
As Kitty Delouchery, the pride o' the Slany!

Come all ye fair cratures, an' stand by her side,
Come all ye bould boys that in coortin' take pride,
An' ye must make answer, there's not one ye see,
So comely to look at, in any degree,
From Ballytoige Bay to the woods o' Shillely,
As Kitty Delouchery, the pride o' the Slany!"

CHAPTER XIV.

Bill Nale, after inspecting, through the window, the company in the lower room, and subsequently deciding, by his observations in the kitchen, that sufficient punch had been sent in to them to insure a late sitting, issued forth, and knocked cautiously at the horse-shoe-stapled door of Shawn-a-Gow's smithy. Signals passed between him and those within, and he was soon admitted.

The forge flared up on high, sending sparks to the wattled roof, and roaring in concert with the blast of the large bellows, to heat to its proper temperament the bar of iron about to be manufactured, by Shawn's massive hand, into the rude weapons that afterwards wrought such cruel slaughter.

The red flame fiercely lit up, till they almost seemed ignited, half of the figures of a number of men closely opposed to, and intercepting its farther illumination of the rough apartment. It died away as the iron was withdrawn to the anvil, and those figures

* Term of endearment.

faded into mysterious uncertainty; and when the glowing metal cooled and blackened, all became dense gloom, except a space immediately around the seemingly-expiring fire. Again it flared up, and again seemed to call the figures into a supernatural visibility; half-defining, at the same time, the wattles overhead, the bench, with the vice, at one side, and other prominent objects: and during this second fitful glare, the forms of three or four additional men were imperfectly suggested to the mind, amid the vague shadow that wrapped the extreme end of the workshop. Altogether, the place was strongly characteristic of the fiery passions of the times, and of the accompanying mystery in which they were sought to be expressed and indulged.

"Hah!—you're at the work, Shawn!" said Bill Nale, when the door closed behind him.

"That's plain to be seen, without witchcraft," answered the smith, as he withdrew the iron from the fire; and then he pounded away, making sparks fly about at every vigorous stroke of his hammer.

Bill took up a pike-head that lay on the forge-hob. It was near a foot in length, and more than two inches in breadth; having a sharp crook low down at one side, and a little hatchet, or cleaver, at the other; the former adjunct intended to be used—as it subsequently was used—in cutting, during close action, the bridles of the cavalry horses. This was the most perfect pike manufactured; and it will be admitted, that when affixed to a handle sometimes measuring fourteen feet, and wielded by a strong arm seconded by an enraged heart, it must have been a formidable weapon. In general, however, the pike-head consisted of a blade, the length and breadth of that mentioned, carelessly pointed, and roughly bevelled towards the edges.

"That's the right sort," remarked Bill to one of the men who surrounded the fire; "through and through, by —" measuring it across his body.

"From the heart to the back-bone," replied the man; "or, if the Sassenach was mannerly, from the back to the breast wid it."

"As I'll sarve a thousand iv 'em, afore long, on the green sod that they think to redden wid our own blood," resumed Bill.

"Never fear, boy,—we'll take our own parts," was the reply; and at this moment the forge blazed up, to show to each of the speakers the grim smile that accompanied the words of the other.

"Tell me," continued Bill, "did the boys you spoke about, come to-night?"

"They're here to the fore."

"Then we'll just stop a-bit, till Jack Delouchery has the tickler pounded out, an' then make thrue men o' them."

Rattling Bill was far from carrying himself, before the domineering Gow, with the bullying air that was his usual habit; and

on the present occasion he evinced a serious ardency, calculated to recommend him to Shawn's consideration, and generally to inspire the feelings he wished to create.

Jack Delouchery soon flung the new-finished weapon among a heap of others that had been fashioned during the evening; and was again about to thrust his iron into the fire, when Bill specially addressed him.

"Hould your hand, Shawn, till the boys kiss the primer."

"Make quick work then," growled Shawn; "the night's wearin', an' the things we're forgin' don't want to have the daylight shinin' on 'em:" and tucking his huge fists under his arms, he seated himself on his anvil, as on a throne.

The blast of the great bellows ceased; the column of shooting flame sank down, and there was deep silence, and almost pitch darkness, except, as before noticed, a circular glow around the spot where the seemingly decayed furnace awaited, like the passions of the times, but another puff to set it flaming on high again.

"Where's the boys that's to take the oath?" questioned Bill of the person he had first addressed; who, in a sonorous under-tone, calculated to be heard in the remote corners of the forge, but not a step beyond its walls, called out the names of four men. They answered in the same key, and moved from the utter gloom, to the glimmering spot where stood the master of the ceremonies.

"An', by the hokey-farmer," continued Bill, qualifying his blasphemy, "ye're goin' to do the only thing that'll save ye 'an yours from ruin an' slaughter."

"God's truth you tell 'em, mon," said a person among the crowd, speaking in the northern accent.

"Isn't that Charley M'Guire, I hear?" asked Bill.

"He, and no uther," he was answered.

"What way did the Protestants sarve you in the North, Charley?"

"It's a bad story, troth," said the man, "but I'll e'en give it ti ye, to show ye what ye're to reckon on from the Protestants o' the Sooth; for, Sooth or North, an Orangeman is the same. I am but one of thousands of souls, hunted out of hoose an' home, and sent roaming over the country, without shed to shelter us or bit or sup for our lips: and hundreds of our religion, who didn't flee, were killed. And when I flitted, my gude woman, getting up from her lying-in bed, thought to flit wi' me; but she died in the next field —troth, died, and her baby by her side, too; and there's my story, lads!"

Smothered ejaculations of grief, rage and abhorrence, burst from all, as Shawn sprang to his feet from his anvil.

"And, hear till me, lads," continued the man, in the same subdued tone he had before used, and which distinctly gave the idea that he was rehearsing a grief, long laid up to his heart, and che-

rished in his mind; "hear till me, lads—may my soul never see Heaven's light, but I'll have life for my gude-woman's life, and life for her child's life!"

"D'ye mind, Jack Delouchery?" questioned Bill; "and now tell me, why is King George makin' sodgers of all the Protestants in Wexford, an' givin' 'em firelocks an' bagnets?"

"I can give answer to that," said a voice, while the taciturn Gow spoke no word; "I hard a dozen o' Capt'n Whaley's Yeomen in Enniscorthy callin' us all gallows Papishes, an' swearin' oath upon oath that they'd cut us down like thistles."

"Oath!" repeated Bill; "talkin' iv their oaths, dhraw near me, boys, an' cock your ears an' listen. Here's the very oath they take, an' ye hard tell of it often; I cum round one iv 'em, an' he gave it to me. Blow up the fire a-bit, *ma-bouchal*, till I read it out for ye; aye, by ———! an' there's no light so good to read it in as the light o' the fire that reddens the iron, that makes the pike, that 'll be waitin' snug for 'em."

The light was accordingly roused, so as to give a quiet, steady blaze; and Bill read as follows from a sheet of soiled paper:—

"I do solemnly swear, that I will be thrue to the King and Government"—(duoul thank em) "and that I will exterminate"—(that manes, boys, no more or less than to slaughther an' kill, an' lave no sowl behind)—"that I will exterminate, as far as I am able"—(Bill might have here put a critical parenthesis, but, with all his cleverness, he missed the blunder)—"the Catholics of Ireland, and that I will wade ankle deep in Papist blood."

The Gow, instinctively catching up his sledge, struck a ringing blow upon his anvil. It acted like the sudden clang of an alarum bell. The group that had been bending forward with breathless attention to the reader, started into sudden and stern expression; eye glared upon eye; each glance, as well as each rigid feature, fitly flashing in the flicker of the furnace blaze; and then might be heard broken utterings of their terror and their resolves for vengeance,—subdued however, in loudness, by the necessity all felt to keep down even the accent of their passions and their purpose.

"We must take care iv ourselves, then," followed up Shawn-a-Gow; and, as if nothing more than his decision had been wanted, the whole group repeated his few words.

"Give our own oath to *me*, Bill Nale," said one of the men, who that night had travelled many a hill-side to be initiated.

"An' *that* I will, as I done by others afore you," replied the grand conspirator.

"Well; I'll blast up the fire for ye, once again," zealously said the agent of the bellows.

"No want of id, now; I have the oath as pat as my prayers: betther, maybe, if the priest was to thry me in the both." He

drew a book from his bosom, and handed it to the new candidate. "Now, keep the silent tongue, every mother's sowl o' ye; an' do you, Pat Mooney, say the words afther me; an' I'll say 'em asy for you, the way a child might folly the lader."

The man stood singly out from the others; while Bill Nale, in the mysterious tones that all had used during the evening, repeated the form of the United Irish oath. Word for word, it was the same oath, now and then administered, by which Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Thomas Addis Emmett, Theobald Wolfe Tone, and the rest of the Protestant plotters of revolution, had originally bound themselves together. It ran thus: "In the awful presence of God, I do voluntarily declare, that I will persevere in endeavouring to form *a brotherhood of affection among Irishmen of every religious persuasion;* and that I will also persevere in my endeavours to obtain an equal, full, and adequate representation of all the people of Ireland.

"I do further declare, that neither hopes, fears, rewards, nor punishments, shall ever induce me directly or indirectly, to inform against any members of this or similar societies, *for any act*, or expression of theirs, done or made, collectively or individually, in or out of the society, *in pursuance of the spirit of the obligation.*"

"Kiss the book, my boy, an' your oath is taken; an' mind it, an' be a thrue man."

It is worthy of remark, that the only part of this celebrated oath which intimated without conveying its real import, is comprised in the last words we have marked in italics; and by referring to the words we have first so marked, the reader will perceive how different from the extended views of its philosophical framers, is the spirit in which it is taken by its present new adherents.

In this place, too, we may be permitted to add, that we do not by any means credit the authenticity of Bill Nale's version of the oath of the opposite fraternity. It does not appear possible that such a pledge of fellowship could be entered into by any body of human beings. Anger, out of the lips of a rancorous sectarian, might unthinkingly speak the threat our juggler has seemed to quote; deliberation, even amongst sectarian rancour, still never, we hope and believe, could utter them.

That such, however, was the bond of adherence amongst Orangemen, the peasantry of the South of Ireland fully believed. The sanguinary persecution of their brethren in the North, and the undisputedly authentic manifestos of "To Hell or Connaught!" often promulgated by their Ulster enemies, necessarily caused such belief to be easy of acceptance. In the plan subsequently avowed by the minister, to produce, by goading the people, partial explosions of the rebellion throughout Ireland, the Protestant yeomanry of Wexford were, so far as Wexford was concerned, chiefly instru-

mental; and the ignorant and terrified population thus became confirmed in their notion, that, according to the oath rehearsed by Bill Nale, they were to be exterminated.

"Throw me your fist, my boy," the initiator continued to the man who had just been sworn.—"The sign, now:" he taught it to him. "That will do; an', to make all sure, whenever you get it from a brother—'Are you up?' you'll say to him; an' he'll make answer, 'I am up.' Then you'll ax him again—'Are you straight?' and he'll say, 'I am.' 'How straight are you?' you'll question; 'As straight as a rush,' 'ill be his word; an' then you'll know him to be a thrue an' loyal brother; an' if he questions you, answer in the same sort: for them is the words iv a thrue man."

The same ceremony was gone through with the three other candidates; and when the inauguration ended,—

"Now blast up your fire to the roof o' the forge," continued the bustling lawgiver, "till Shawn-a-Gow makes the tools for these honest boys, that'll work their way in spite o' guns an' bagnets."

The command was obeyed: once more the furnace sent up its roaring column of flame, revealing the effects of Bill's grim humour upon the features of the group; and Shawn-a-Gow, after a moment of brooding thought, his huge hands still hugged under his arms, suddenly arose from his anvil, and proceeded, with freshened alertness and vigour, to conclude his practical part in the business of the night.

CHAPTER XV.

Months again elapse before our Tale moves forward. It is April: the budding graces of youthful Nature are abroad on every shrub and tree; and that bosom must be made of unkindly stuff, or its primitive sensibilities must have been destroyed by passion, by by care, or by rough contact with the world, which glows not cheerily at the view.

It is April, too, when, with our countenance of deep cogitation, we are employed in compiling our story; and, as we unconsciously raise our eye, and look forth even over the confined view of spring, framed, like a picture, by the limits of our study-window, the furrow above our brow of thought relaxes, the wrinkle of combination around our mouth curves into a smile; and the current of life joyously tingles through our sobered veins.

The cloud that has just shed the gently falling shower, too heavy to be moved by the soft breeze, yet hangs on high,—a sombre canopy, of which the curtained edges, catching the slant sun-

beam, become chequered and fringed, beyond the imitation of art, with glowing vermilion, or with burnished gold. To the west is a mellow, clear speck of sky, whence, in a flood of dazzling light, flows the radiance of the setting luminary. Partly intercepted by intervening trees, garden-turrets, and gothic ruins, he flings his golden smiles but upon portions of objects, while their less favoured parts soften into the cool grey tint of evening. Among the budding trees and garden bushes, he glances at random in laughing brilliancy; changing into a bright yellow the yet unexpanded leaf, or the milky blossom into rich orange; transforming into diamond sparks each rain-drop that pends from bud and branch and blade; clothing in radiance yon ivy-covered castle, and spreading in a milder stream of glory over the distant heights.

The breeze scarce flutters the infant leaves, and, as if to fondle with their young and innocent beauty, tenderly breathes upon the blossoms. Yonder majestic pear-tree, planted by *the monks* of former days, that has opened its flowery bosom to the showers and the sun of more *than a hundred* springs, and that now thickly bears upon its aged branches the blossoming youth of yet another April, supplies on its topmost bough a perch to the happy thrush; who, stretching his speckled neck, pours out a full long strain of joy and melody, not unheard or misunderstood by his listening mate, nested in the budding hedge beneath, where, under the yellow lining of her wings, she screens her callow brood.

The robin, standing on a humbler height, distends his vermilion throat, and, in answer to the challenge of a distant rival, vigorously chants his soft and plaintive stanza: alternately they listen to each other's music, and sing note for note, in a little strife of harmony. The industrious rooks, modifying into some cadence of affection their harsh croak, forget their gregarious habits, and wing home in pairs. The sparrow's flippant chirrup has lost its sauciness, and is changed to an insinuating twitter as he frolicks round his yet coy mistress; or, more serious grown, comes to take her place in the nest, that, ere the cheery sun has quite sunk, she may have her share of enjoyment. And other birds, of various plumage, vault into the air, flap their wings in the sunbeam, and perch, and vault again, contributing their different songs of exultation. All is fair and fresh, pleasant and good to look upon, to listen to, and to inhale; Nature's youthful beauty, varied at every glance, fills the eye; the breeze, the air is fragrance, and the ear rings with blended sounds of rejoicing.

But from the fascinations of Nature we must unwillingly withdraw our regards; for, in as fair a land as Spring ever strewed with flowers, those for whom the earth is adorned and made prolific, are preparing for deeds doomed to soil her beauty with blood, and to turn her abundance into desolation:—a land blessed by God, and accursed in the acts of men!

The "Upper-baronial," as it has been technically termed by little Peter Rooney, but which was in very few respects similar to the more regular assemblies so denominated, will show that, upon the eve of the insurrection planned by the Northern and Dublin leaders, the county of Wexford remained almost unorganized. The initiation in the forge illustrates the same fact. Government, aware of the peaceable dispositions, in the first instance, of this portion of the kingdom, left it nearly unprotected. When, subsequently, agents of "The Union" began to arouse, by appeals to their instinct of self-preservation, the disaffection of the Wexfordians, still, from necessity or choice, the chief armed force left to deal, according to a plan already glanced at with the people, was the Protestant yeomanry of the county; such as in a former chapter we have seen under review. After government, at its own leisure, caused to be arrested in Dublin, many of the principal heads of the conspiracy,—a measure it *could* have taken long before;—and after the civil law of the land, became on the 30th of March suspended all over Ireland, and military domination decreed in its stead, these men well evinced their fitness for precipitating into partial outbreaks, the population entrusted to their care.

We write to a public, long familiar with liberty and independence,—long delivered from despotism—and who, during at least the lapse of two centuries, have not experienced on their privileged persons a touch of Despotism's most darling mode of coercion—bodily torture. The lowest subject of England would flout, with manly laughter, the notion that, for any breach of law or statute, his flesh was to quiver beneath the torturer's gripe. So safe, immediately at home, he most probably supposes, in favour of his fellow-subject of Ireland, similar exemption from a similar cruelty and infamy. It is therefore with some doubts of even the capability of the minds of Englishmen to receive our facts, that we proceed to mention in what manner the trampled down men of our country were, in many instances, driven into the toils which were coolly set for them by mongrel legislators, neither Irish nor English.

The arrest, in Dublin, before a single insurgent took the field, of the influential leaders, may be said to have broken and paralyzed, tardily as was the measure adopted, the plan and progress of the conspiracy; and it need not be doubted that, if wise measures of conciliation had been then adopted towards the people, the rebellion of 1798 would never have occurred. But this consummation does not seem to have been wished for. So soon as martial law was proclaimed throughout the country, the military, such as they were, proceeded, upon private information, or upon mere suspicion, to acts that made open insurrection in different places, and particularly in the scene of our Tale, almost necessary. Houses and cabins, in which the objects of their vengeance could not be found,

were burnt to ashes. When the suspected person was apprehended, not only did he writhe under the scourge, until he fainted or died; but, in the view of compelling him to confess against others, he was either half-strangled, and called back from the verge of eternity to be again catechised, or—hearken, free and proud Englishmen!—the hair of his head was cut off, a cap smeared with pitch was applied, and, when it had closely adhered, was violently dragged away, almost scalping the sufferer.

But we anticipate. The sequel of our story rests upon an occurrence and a scene which, so far as it is possible to submit details to the reader, will illustrate these general statements.

And in the midst of such public terror and confusion, did Sir William Judkin plead for the hand of Eliza Hartley. Sir Thomas could not account to himself for his tardiness in granting the lover's suit; and he strove to be convinced that he entertained no repugnance to the suitor. But ultimately the marriage-day was fixed,—a day upon which Eliza Hartley would complete her nineteenth year; the exact age at which her mother had become a wife.

The interval, until her proposed change of condition, was contemplated by our heroine with much anxiety. She heard discussed, by every one around her, convulsions that might disorganize the whole frame of society, and expose her, and all dear to her, to frightful perils; and her apprehensions of another danger, though it was of a private kind, especially weighed down her spirits.

After Sir William Judkin's account of his amicable meeting with the juggler, Eliza's dread of that person, as an agent of Harry Talbot, almost passed away. Nanny's anecdote of the conversation she had heard outside the hedge, became shorn of its terrors. But the industrious gossip afterwards demanded an audience, for the purpose of detailing new information on the subject, and our heorine's doubts and fears were called up afresh. The adventure which Nanny tramped to Hartley Court to communicate, we shall rehearse rather as it happened, than as the fair auditor was compelled to receive it.

Using an increased degree of caution in her proceedings, proportioned to her increased abhorrence and fears of the wizard who could cut off and put on, at his leisure, the head of Shawn-a-Gow's bracket-hen, still Nanny kept her eye on Rattling Bill Nale. Into the boudoir of Nelly Hannigan, the housekeeper of Mr. Talbot, she sometimes contrived to insinuate herself. Under the pretence of professions of pity "for the poor young masther bein' crassed," as she termed his disappointment in love, Mrs. Hannigan was glad to receive, for an evening's gossip, her old acquaintance; and Nanny always took care to steal into the house, without exposing her person to the observations of its proprietor.

During such visits, our Knitter learned that some surprise existed amongst the household at the intimate footing upon which

the bravo and the squire seemed to be together. She learned, too, that their conferences were frequently held in a grove, near the house, and at a particular spot in that grove. Warily, but promptly, did she take her measures. The ground was first reconnoitred; and at daybreak, upon a following morning, when she learned that Nale had, the previous night, been an inmate of the house, Nanny, about the time they might be expected to issue forth, assumed her position under a great lime-tree, which, as if designed to screen eves-droppers, threw out, from a trunk of not more than three feet in height, branches of noble growth, that, sweeping to the ground, formed an almost artful hiding-place for the inquisitive old dame.

Under this tree, we remember to have taken shelter from a torrent of rain; and while listening to the assault of waters above and around us, our person remained perfectly dry, until the sun, without penetrating our shade, again shone forth, and invited us to continue our ramble. And beneath the same canopy, agitated by contending hopes and fears, and broiling with curiosity, did our friend Nanny conceal herself. The leaves had not yet gained their full expansion, so that she might catch an imperfect view of any persons passing without; and she calculated that the shadow in which she settled, aided by the crippled position which she assumed, and by her perfect stillness, would prevent passengers from having the same advantage over her;—in truth, she first heaped her cloak, close to the trunk, to about the same height and space she proposed to fill, placed her foxy hat upon it, and then, going out, peered through the branches, and found the effigy undistinguishable even to her curious eye.

After more than an hour of patient expectation, Nanny crouched close, at the sound of approaching voices and footsteps; and Rattling Bill, accompanied by Harry Talbot, in his uniform of a Yeoman captain, came up.

"And the day is fixed," said Harry Talbot, in a tone of deep sorrow.

"Sure enough," replied his companion.

"How did you gain your intelligence?"

"Do you know an ould *slinkeen** iv a jade, Capt'n, that goes peepin' an' gostherin' through the parish? they call her Nanny the Knitter."

Nanny felt uncomfortable in her concealment.

"Yes," replied Talbot; "an ungrateful old Jezabel she is."

"An ould colloch," continued Nale, "that 'ud sell her own sow an' body for a copper groat; but she'd betther 'ware me, or I'll put her from peepin' on my road. Well! I hard this same ould Tory, when she didn't think I was within ear-shot, tellin' the news to Misthress Delouchery, beyant; an' to-day month they think they'll

* A mean idler.

be married. Hah! hah! what a guess they have; there's divarsion in spilin' their sport, if there was nothin' else in id."

"Why delay to act, till the last moment?"

"We must go our own way to work, Capt'n, that's all: there's but one in the world Bill Nale is afeard of, an' he goes by ordhers o' that one."

"Then, of myself, I will act openly; if, by any delay of our's, this marriage takes place, I am a wretch for ever."

"There's more of id, again. You can't do without me, Capt'n. Who's to bear you out? Tell me that, my bould commandher."

"You speak truly."

"Then,—a word out o' your jaw, an' I lave you to fight your own battle. There's no one to know what happens to that frolicksome blade, barrin' my own self an' them I can depend on: so let us work the way we like."

They passed on, and their words became indistinct in distance; while Nanny literally shivered and chattered with apprehension.

Out she would have crept, did she not sorely fear observation and detection, in the very act for which she had just been threatened with chastisement. In this dilemma, she pulled up her beads from the depths of her pockets, and, stipulating for a merciful release from present danger, hurried over her propitiatory orisons. But doubtless the part of the dialogue she had lost, was as important as that which she had heard; and, after an interval of piety and self-assurance, Nanny burned with almost her former curiosity.

As if to give her an equivalent for the continuous information she could not, however, hope to attain, Fortune re-directed to her sanctuary, after they had walked the length of the grove, the footsteps of Talbot and his associate; and, without farther change of place, they now ended the conversation.

"If your attempt should fail?" questioned the former.

"Fail? that's what often happens wid me, isn't id? bud, supposin' it did turn up so, there's another, an' as good a way, by the livin' farmer,—hark'ye, Capt'n:" he rustled against Nanny's screen, and his voice sank to a hollow growl: "I have the ould father, himself, in the net, whenever it's plasin' to me to dhraw the line."

"What do you mean?" questioned Talbot, starting at the words he heard.

"That's a sacret for my own sef. Capt'n; but, this mooch I'll whisper to you. Sir Thomas 'll swing as two sticks can hould him, afore his daughther is married against your wish an' likin."

"I cannot understand you—you must explain your meaning."

"Must is for the king, Capt'n, though it'll soon go hard wid him to *have* his must, I can tell him: but there'll be hot work a-doin', an' I'll be in thick o' the play, runnin' wid the hare, an' hauldin' wid the hound; an' I'll do my own business, in every

kind, in the height o' the hurry—*if* I don't, call me what the people wouldn't b'lieve o' me, a fool widout brains. But I must be thrapsin', Capt'n, an' I want a shiner."

"You will inform me more particularly of your measures; else, how can you expect my co-operation?"

"That's as much as if I was to say, help, a-hand?"

"Such is my meaning."

"Then keep your help, supposin' you don't like to give id, Captain; I can steer my own coorse; and who's the loser by our stayin' asundher? When we're betther friends, may be I'd let you into my crans; and the best thing in the world for openin', or shettin' a mouth, is a goolden kay, or a goolden padlock."

I've forgotten my purse: come with me to the house:—but no—I expect a person who must not see you—await me here."

"That same I'll do; an' becase its beginnin' to rain a dhrop, you'll find me undher this three, Capt'n;" and as Talbot departed, Rattling Bill, to the direful consternation of Nanny, rudely broke through her frail screen, and she was yet in that state of intense terror, during which mind and body seem to become one mingled and confounded mass of shrinking confusion, when he stumbled against her squatted person.

"In the name o' the duoul, who have we here?" he asked in a muttering, boding tone. She did not answer, but, while her lips unconsciously puckered up into a spasmodic and pitiable expression, as if she were about to burst into crying, and while they mumbled, inaudibly, the prayers her mind did not comprehend, poor Nanny's eye, with the stupified glare of the hare's when surprised in her form, fixed on that of the intruder.

"In the name of the duoul!" he repeated, raising his terrible voice.

"It's a poor ould lump iv a sinner, my honey pet," at length whispered Nanny, "that's just cum out o' the sun to be sayin' her prayers!"

"By the sowl o' my mother!" imprecated Bill, and (all the dreadful properties of the old northern witch coming across Nanny's mind) he could not have imprecated more astoundingly—"by the sowl o' my mother! an' *that's* the best work you could be at, the prasent time, for it's runnin' in my mind you'll want a good bag o' prayers on the road you're to thravel, afore we part."

"Och! purtect us!" screamed Nanny; "are you goin' to hurt sich a poor crature iv a sinner?"

"Listen—or I'll make id a sore day to you: I know you're on the peep afther me, an' I know you well enough to see you're as cute as an ould fox."

"Och! that I mayt'nt commit a sin—an' bad manners to me"—Nanny began to asseverate—

"Whisht, I bid you! no matther to you how I come to know

your schames—not a word out o' your head, but now, up on your ould legs, an' mind me, well:—only your face makes me pity you, I'd kill you on the spot where you stand! But, let me hear you open your mouth to spake one word in anything you ever hard me say—or let me ketch you come peepin' on my path again, an' the death you'll get is sich as no ould cat in the counthry ever died. Do you mind, I say?"

"I'll mind id the longest day I have breath in my poor ould body;—may I never sin, but I will!"

As Nanny replied, there was in her manner a conviction of the necessity of the resolution, which satisfied Bill Nale that it would be adhered to. He saw he had properly taken her in hand.

"Yes;—I b'lieve you won't desave me, for your own sake—an' becase you can't desave me; mind that, too! I'd know id, if you did, by the same manes I knew all you thried afore now. An' listen to more from me. Tell Miss Eliza Hartley, it's for her sake I'm hinderin' her from marryin' Sir William Judkin. Tell her, that if she ever calls him husband, woe an' desthruction 'ill come upon her and her's, root an' branch. An' now go your ways, an' say your prayers for thanks that you get off so azy."

"Musha, my honey pet—"

"Go along, you ould, snakin' pretender!"—and, at a push through the branches, she inhaled the air of freedom. And Nanny turned not to the right nor to the left, nor did she for an instant slacken her utmost speed, but ambled along, like a rat that had just left part of his tail in a trap, until she reached her own lone cabin, a dwelling seldom tenanted. And then, closing and barring her clumsy door, and dropping on a three-legged stool, she devoutly crossed her forehead, thumped her breast, raised her shadowy eyes to Heaven, and, not forgetful of Bill's parting advice, poured forth, for her miraculous escape, as hearty a thanksgiving as had ever passed her lips on any former occasion.

The day, the evening lapsed, and, for the first time during the last forty years, Nanny the Knitter was not seen abroad. To avoid her sworn enemy, was the old woman's predominant instinct, and in it the habits of a life became temporarily absorbed. Even for the better part of the next day she did not stir out; and when at last tempted across her threshold, it was in the company of neighbours who, much alarmed at her sudden disappearance from the high-roads, short cuts, and ingle corners of the parish, had come to seek her in her barricadoed cabin.

But confidence gradually returned to her heart, and in its influence the possessing selfishness of terror somewhat abated, and permitted her to think of the application to others of her whole fearful adventure under the umbrella lime-tree. "Her darlin' iv a poor crature, the honey, Miss Eliza!"—What was to be done in her regard?—Must she remain ignorant of the plot against her?

And "the hansome pet iv a Sir William?"—Did that terrible man mean that even from Eliza's ear Nanny was to keep secret all she had overheard? If so, why command her to bear a message to her fair young patroness, evidently connected with the conversation between him and "Capt'n Square Talbot?" And here Nanny recollected, in shuddering emotion, that she was as firmly bound to do what Bill Nale had commanded, as she was not to do what he had interdicted; and, at the thought, up she rose from her stool, and softly trudged off to Hartley Court, determined to deliver his embassy at least—"an' the mercies direct her in the rest."

Upon the road, it strongly occurred to her that, in the present state of affairs, she had better not seek to closet herself with Eliza, lest, when the fact became ascertained by a certain person—and ascertained it surely would be—she might fall under his censure. Nanny therefore hoped and prayed for a rencounter with Miss Hartley, quite by chance, upon some neutral ground, outside the house. Nor was she disappointed in her laudable and prudent wishes. The object of her mission appeared, seated beneath her favourite ash-tree, buxom Spring budding and bursting around her, and she looking the very deity that called forth, and breathed life, and freshness, and beauty upon leaf, flower, and blossom.

In an uninterrupted whisper, which the bird on the next branch could not overhear, Nanny delivered the message of Rattling Bill. It begat, of course, many questions and enquiries from the listener; and Nanny was sore pressed, between her great fear of her tyrant, and her as great inclination to answer at full length, as well out of sincere anxiety for her patroness, as out of pure yearning to tell a story, and a wonderful story, in which, strictly speaking, she had herself been the heroine: Eliza urged her cross-examination; and the old woman now hesitated, and hemmed, and groaned, and rocked herself backward and forward, at questions she had, in the first instance, skilfully evaded. Eliza persevered; her manner became energetic from fear and doubt; tears flooded her eyes; and Nanny, casting her vague orbs all round, after every sentence, at length detailed circumstantially, as we have given it, but in her own usual way, the whole adventure.

It was told, and the afflicted gossip had departed, and Eliza remained motionless on her seat under the ash-tree. Consternation filled her thoughts and her bosom. Something fell at her feet and rustled in the grass. She picked up a piece of crumpled paper; she opened it and read—

"Upon business the most vital to you, I come to speak one word;—but though now looking on you, I will not intrude without thus preparing you for my appearance. "H. T."

She had scarce perused the lines when the writer of them sprang

over the fence of the adjacent grove, and, bowing profoundly, stood before her. Eliza just had sufficient self-command to control a loud and long scream, the instinctive outbreak into its climax, of her previous consternation. But the first struggle of a new passion—indignation and contempt for the person who thus intruded on her—checked her frenzy, and otherwise shaped her voice and conduct.

"Out of the path, sir!" she cried, casting his billet to her feet, as she sprang up.

"I plead but for one word, Miss Hartley—but one word!" said Talbot, in a tone and manner of the humblest supplication.

"Back, sir!" She proudly swept by him with a firm step: "long since we have come to an understanding;—and, even were it not so, with the associate of a mean knave and villain, I hold no converse!"

"The connexion is indeed, or seems to be, degrading to me; but it comes from necessity, not choice," he replied, following her.

"Explain to others, sir! I ask no explanation at your hands; and presume not thus to force your attendance upon me. Stand where you are, I say!"—as he gained her side.

"I must disobey you, Miss Hartley—must bear you company to the last moment when I can do so without observation."

Not once looking on him, she quickened her pace—every pace brought her nearer to home—her head erect, her brow knit, her cheeks flushed, and her bosom heaving.

"I am forced, Miss Hartley, by your own infatuation, into that very connexion," he continued; "I am forced—if you do not pity me, and protect yourself—to be a participator in acts which must sink me to the level of that very wretch! Save me, Eliza!—at present I ask—I entreat but little from you;—I ask that you be but deliberate in your arrangements with my rival—that you take time—"

"Rude,—gross person!" she muttered, while a deeper colour dyed her cheeks.

"Think of me as you will, I have no alternative but this plain mode of speaking—no other alternative to shield you, your father, and myself from destruction."

You threaten, sir? You would scare us with plots contrived by you and your worthy fellow?"

"Break the fellowship, Eliza! break it at one word. Restore me to myself!—Promise what I have requested! Defer—"

"Until your plans be perfected?"

"No! I seek not to profit by the delay; but there is dreadful danger in a refusal."

"I contemn it."

She was raising the latch of the orchard-door. The voice of her

favoured lover pronouncing her name, echoed from the adjoining garden.

"Hark, sir!" she said, in a strong whisper, as she laid one finger on her lip, pointed with the other towards the garden, and flashed upon Talbot a glance of mingled triumph, consciousness of protection, and bitter taunt.

He started at the voice of his rival, yet almost instantly seized her hand. She had stepped over the threshold of the orchard-door, and struggled spiritedly to free herself. Talbot continued, during the struggle, to speak in snatches.

"Your simple promise would have saved you from an avowal of the cause of my urgency; which now must be made, and which it will wither your heart to hear; which now must be made though you die under it,—and though I foresee many other miserable results from the rash disclosure. But listen, listen, Eliza Hartley!" —his closely whispered words pierced her ear like the hiss of a serpent,—"You are about to wed—the husband of another."

He dropped her hand and precipitately withdrew. But he could now have held that hand without an effort to retain it. She stood mute and motionless as a statue; and her posture, and the deadly paleness of her cheeks, and the vagueness of her eyes, formed a striking contrast to her late graceful though excessive vivacity. She felt the blood coldly rushing through every vein, until it settled in a sickening mass about her heart. Her head drooped, and she would have fallen, but that the voice of Sir William Judkin again reached her. The instinct of avoidance rallied her strength. She staggered into the middle of the orchard, flung herself to a shade formed by encircling fruit-bushes; and, panting for breath, crouched close. In a few seconds, the footsteps of him she now dreaded—"of the husband of another," bounded past her, and were lost to her ear, after having issued through a door that led to grounds at the back of the house. She sprang up—ran—flew to her chamber—locked and bolted her door, and sank on her bed.

CHAPTER XVI.

Returning to the house, after his vain search through garden, orchard, grove and shrubbery, Sir William urged Eliza's aunt to seek her in her chamber. The good lady found her niece in a highly feverish state. All became panic and bustle. Her father flew to her pillow. Physicians were ordered in by despatch. Sir William mounted his fleetest horse, and brought back the head practitioner of a rather remote town. Upon the return of the gentleman from the patient's bed-side, the terrified lover learned that there was no extreme danger; and then he sent a pressing, entreating message, for one word, one glance—only one.

Eliza's father held her throbbing hand when the message was delivered, and he could not misinterpret the start—the shrink—the shudder, the closing of eye, and the averting of head, with which, in utter silence, she answered it.

Tenderly he sought his child's confidence. His tears, while he murmured his entreaties, wetted her brow. She then wept too, was relieved, became collected, and felt it her duty to unbosom herself to her only parent.

From first to last, Sir William became acquainted with all the details of the intimacy between Talbot and the juggler, of which, from her own observations on the review-ground, and subsequently from Nanny's gossip, Eliza was aware. She paused, and he could make little of her communication so far. Though matter of some alarm, it evidently was not what had produced her present agitation.

And, during her pause, Eliza wondered at herself for making this information a preface to the real theme. It seemed as if she were preparing to arraign Harry Talbot, instead of his rival. And why should she not? A relieving light burst in! The mere assertion of her lover's treachery and infamy had at the moment struck her powerless, and left her no presence of mind to try the accusation by the test of the character and probable motives of the accuser. But now restored to self-possession, and after having gone over, in her statements to her father, the particulars of Talbot's degrading connexion with the mountebank, and of their secret conversations together, it was evident that, at least without proof, she could not be called upon to believe the word of Talbot. Since he had lost himself so far as to plot against her and Sir William, in unison with one of the lowest persons in society, he

might naturally sink lower still, by inventing a false accusation to promote his plans.

Her father watched the change in her features during Eliza's reverie. He saw her eye lighten up with its old beam of vivacity; he saw her clasp her hands in joy. She spoke again, in a changed voice, and rapidly told, with vindicating comments, drawn from her recent thoughts, rather than as a story to be credited by the hearer, the dreadful charge preferred against her lover by his rival.

A second time she was silent, her eye raised watchfully to her father. He smiled, and kissed her rapturously, and her heart experienced full relief. The parental caress partly came from joy at her rallied spirits and promised health, partly from the conviction that indeed Eliza had nothing to fear.

She clung to his stooped neck, and fervently returned his salutation. He folded her in his arms, and softly prognosticated that her hopes would be realized; that her former suitor had obviously framed a falsehood to injure his happy rival; and that few days would elapse until, triumphantly cleared of the slander, Sir William and she would, hand in hand, once more be on the road to happiness. Meantime, he agreed with her, that farther communication should cease between them; and having pressed his lips to her brow, again and again, her father left her, smiling through delicious tears.

He left her to seek Sir William Judkin. They met in the drawing-room, in Miss Alicia's presence. Bluntly, and without unnecessary ceremony, the parent entered on his subject.

"Alicia, my dear, our beloved is better; and, I dare promise, will be glad to see you."

"Thank God!" the young lover said, in unfeigned ecstacy, as the equally delighted old lady, hurrying to see her darling, tapped her tiny heels over the carpet, in a quicker succession of sound than they usually produced.

"Now, Sir William, we are alone; and learn, in a word, that Miss Hartley's illness concerns you more nearly than perhaps you suppose."

"I thought as much, Sir:—that is, her disinclination to allow but of my appearance at the door of her chamber, filled me with doubts and fears of I know not what."

"Well, you shall now know the cause of her momentary abhorrence."

"Abhorrence, Sir Thomas!"

"Attend."—And the accusation was briefly stated. It had not been uttered, when, with all the quick energy of indignant innocence, the lover started to his feet. In unmeasured words, he denounced it as an atrocious slander. Sir Thomas observed him coolly and attentively, but not without interest. And—

"Name my infamous defamer!" cried the young man.

"I will, when you are calmer."

"I disclaim calmness, Sir Thomas! Name him, I say! only name him, and you shall see the coward dragged to your threshold, and there compelled to recant his falsehood!"

"We must proceed in a different manner, Sir William Judkin. In the first place, until the charge be formally refuted, you will perceive the necessity of avoiding any communication with Miss Hartley."

"*You* doubt me, then, Sir Thomas? *you* suppose me the villain this lie would make me?"

"No; if I did, even the present approach to explanation—even a word of it—should not pass under my roof. On the contrary, I have not a doubt but that, at the proper opportunity, you will prove yourself still worthy of all the happiness your best friends can wish you, Sir William."

He extended his hand, smiling soberly. The lover clasped it, bowed his head on it, pressed it to his heart, and, with tears in his fine eyes, murmured expressions of deep gratitude; adding, "And I will not now inquire what may or may not be *her* present convictions on the subject."

"And, there, *I* thank *you* for your delicacy," said Sir Thomas.

"But though, just now, I denounced calmness," continued Sir William, "your comforting confidence *has* made me calm, and calm enough to repeat my requests for the name of my base accuser."

"There is still a degree of calmness which you have yet to attain, and which I presumed, to my own mind, as indispensable for your satisfaction in that point," answered Sir Thomas, again smiling. "But, fear nothing. I pledge myself that you *shall* be satisfied. And, for the present, I require *your* pledge to keep secret, until the moment of investigation, the whole matter I have communicated."

"Well, dear Sir Thomas, I surrender myself wholly to your guidance, and I give the pledge."

"And that is acting wisely, and as I would wish to see a son-in-law of mine deport himself. And now, let us change the topic. We dine together, and alone, this day—no refusal; I request your company. To-morrow I will call upon you, at your own door, to meet me in the measures I propose to take."

But at the exact time that this conversation occurred at Hartley Court, another conference took place, in a lonesome field, midway between that venerable mansion and Shawn-a-Gow's village, which portended a discomfiture, in a summary way, of the meeting proposed for the next morning between the two Baronets.

"I'm afeard o' my life, Bill Nale," said a tattered fellow, with a wooden leg, the same we have seen as Bill's accomplice at the

review; "I'm afeard o' my life that you'll never make the *own-shuck*,* Davy Moore, go stoutly to the job."

"Hah!" answered his principal, "leave id to me; an' if I don't put him up to id, Davy is a wiser boy nor Bill Nale; an' *that* I'm for doubtin'."

"Couldn't we get more help?" asked wooden-leg.

"No; we couldn't!—an' did you hear me, then? ar'n't all our own *roolacks*† too far off? an' not a sowl, in these parts, 'ud rise a finger agin any thing next or near to the Hartleys; an' they have a regard for the young thief himsef: he's civil to 'em; an', along wid that, they think he's o' the same mind wid the ould Croppy, an' 'ud be for joinin' 'em at the risin'-out."

"Well; I see we must do it ourselves."

"An' more nor that, too; a sthrangher—barrin' one we can manage, like Davy Moore—'ud be askin' questions—an' questions we can't answer. He moost wanish as if the ground opened and swallowed him."

"Aye, by the deed! an' sure you're the person most concarned, so I lave it to you."

"The night 'll be dark," said Bill.

"The moon is clane out these three nights; an' we wanted cat's eyes last night to do our business in the grove."

"An the *cadger*‡ 'ill have the horse and car at the cross?"

"He'll be there as soon as the dark comes thick; undher the shade o' the wood, an' beyant the little bridge, where you'll want to grope him out to find him."

"Then, here's the good plan, Sam Timbertoe. His honour is more nor a match for the both iv us together, barrin' we tipped him from his saddle, which we don't want to do this time: but Davy Moore is more nor his match again: as strong as a plough-horse; an' while he grips the blade, an' houlds him tight an' fast, you an' myself 'ill put him in a way that a child might manage him; an' then, up on the cadger's car he goes, an' the wind won't ketch us till he lies sthretched at his ase undher the ould walls iv Dunbrody. Afther it's done, Sam, besides what you know, there's goold in Square Talbot's purse."

"Betther an' betther, by the deed!"

"Come on, the stick-leg to help you at a pinch."

"Aye; an' it's often it helped me to clear the way through a crowd, when I'd get the use o' my limbs iv a sud'n."

"Well, then, off wid you, an' be at the spot, in time."

"I will, by the deed!"

And Mr. Sam Timbertoe hobbled away upon the subject of his recent eulogy, and his chief shaped his course to the cabin of Poll Beehan, "the mother o' Davy Moore, the Waver."

* Silly person. † Desperate characters. ‡ A crabbed little boy.

The dwelling was far from being so very wretched as Irish cabins generally are. The husband had been a good tradesman, and, occasionally, an industrious man. Upon setting out in the world, he rented four or five acres of a hill-side, that rose over the village, and in some of the intervals of his occupation as a weaver, he had reclaimed, from time to time, the meagre sod. As this possession was held on moderate terms, he could support a cow or two, and join their product to his handicraft earning, so that people called him and his wife "a thriving couple." One only fault he had:—he would "break out," as the periodical fit was termed, "and drink to the last farthing," Poll Beehan permitted him to lay his hands on. Yet, when the paroxysm passed away, he could return to his loom very soberly, and work, work, work, almost without wetting his lips during double the time of its endurance. Taken altogether, his lapses did not, however, permit of as much success in the world as the neighbours gave him credit for. He died; and the widow prospered better than the wife had done. His only child, Davy, inherited his industry, without his bacchanalian irregularities; and, by dint of her darling's solid perseverance, from year's end to year's end, Poll Beehan really grew to be a rich woman. And if Davy derived his industry from his father, to his mother he was indebted for his unmeasured credulity in the marvellous. To cheer his sickly and pensive childhood, she had unsparingly poured into his mind all the tales of fairy influence with which her own overflowed; and as from infancy to manhood he never mixed with the world, but almost exclusively depended for companionship upon her and his loom, the impressions thus received, and constantly kept up, reduced him to such a state of miserable imbecility, that he feared supernatural injury in every blast of wind; and would run, at his best speed, if the straws on the road happened to be agitated by the breeze into those tiny whirlings so frequently observable.

Between his mother and him, their cabin was the very abode of whispering superstition. There was a horse-shoe nailed on the threshold for good-luck. Bundles of old iron, that had been found abroad from time to time, hung up about the walls for the same talismanic purpose. A cross of platted straw presided over the door-jamb; and these and other symptoms proclaimed at a glance, to the experienced eye, the besotted yet ludicrous humours of the inmates.

The whizzing of Poll Beehan's wheel, with which she was winding yarn on spindles, preparatory to its being fixed in the loom, prevented her from hearing Bill Nale's approach, until his harsh voice sounded just at her ear.

"Hah! Poll, you ould sinner, where's the son?"

"Ah, thin, save you kindly, sir, my jewel, an' sure you'll sit yoursef down;"—with much appearance of deferential fuss, draw-

ing forward one of her **suggan*-bottomed chairs;—"Davy!" calling into the inner room, where he was at work—"Davy, come wid speed;—Ah, thin, sir, it's little good he's doin', with the fear o' what's hangin' over him;—Davy! why don't you make haste?"

"Oh, what ails you mother!" moaned Davy within, shuffling to disentangle himself from the loom.

"Come down here, till I be spakin' to you!" cried Nale;—"an' it's myself, Poll Beehan, is the boy to get him clear o' what's hangin' over him;—I was among 'em in Sculloch Gap last night, an' settled the job intirely."

"Och, you may be rewarded, sir, an' have blessins on your road!"

"Never an ould *colloch* that comes acrass me but is mighty open-handed wid her prayers; but who's the fool to care for the waggin o' sich sole-leather tongues? Did you put your yallow claw into the stockin' for me? that's the talk."

"I'm a poor, lone widow-woman, an', a little while ago, my good cow was overlooked, an' I lost her; an' it's little sich as me has, barrin' what—"

"Poh! I could count to the farthen, for you, what's in the ould blue stock'n, in the chest that I was spakin' iv; so, go an' croak out two balloons,† or *Moya Critha* may croak Davy into the hill—an' much good may her prize do her!"

"Och, thin! sure, sure," rocking backward and forward on her stool, and continuing to repeat twice almost every word, as a kind of accompaniment to her see-saw motion; while she clasped her hands round her knees, that reached nearly to her chin;—"sure, sure, iv it cum to my turn to beg 'em from dour to dour, on my bare knees, by fardens at a time, it's mysef, mysef, aroon, the poor, lone mother iv him, wouldn't let that misfort'ne iv all misfort'nes, come on my poor, clane, likely boy—Och, Davy!" addressing him as he slowly entered; "your poor cratur, sure, sure, it isn't the poor widow, wid the one son, wid the one son! 'ud stop her hand to dhraw the heart's blood, iv it was to save him!"

"Och, mother! don't make sich a *keentheeaun* on me, afore my time, any how," remonstrated Davy; "don't be cryin', mother, don't be cryin'."

"Get up out o' that!" cried Bill Nale, "an' go do what I bid you; an' let Davy stay here, an' be said by me, an' I'll keep him from all harum, for you."

The poor woman slowly rose, and left the room, to comply with the knave's exorbitant demand—exorbitant, indeed, when we recollect, that during twenty years she had saved forty pounds, and was now compelled to give up the careful scrapings-together of two whole years of that period. Perhaps, sincere as was her pathos

* Suggan—Hay-rope. † Guineas, then so called.

on Davy's account, the thought added a pang to it. "Now, Davy, my boy," said Nale, after she had departed, "I am goin' to tell you the way you'll keep clear o' Moya Critha. You an' I must go to-night handy to Sir Thomas Hartley's gate; an' as I was tould by them that knows id, a brave young squire 'ill be comin' by, ridin' on a horse. You're a big, sthrong boy, an', besides, you'll have good help from friends o' mine that you won't see—an', now, would you think mooch o' doin' a thing to him 'ill be ridin' by, jist to save yoursef from the ugliest ould spawn that's to be found among the whole throop o' them in Sculloch Gap?"

"Oh, I'd do any thing to stay clear iv her—any thing bud go out alone in the dark o' the night."

"Poh, man, I'll be at your elbow. We'll go there together; didn't I tell you so!"

"Oh, I'd run my head undher the harthstone," resumed Davy, slowly following up his last thought, "or I'd knock id agin the wall, so I would"—and he stood up and stupidly looked his readiness to brain himself,—"I would by my deed-an'-deed."

"Well then, Davy, listen to the long an' the short iv id. Moya moost have you, or she moost have the other I tould you of, that she cast her unloocky eye on, the night afore the last; she doesn't care which now, but she won't wait, an' she can't touch *him*, by rason iv a charum he got from a fairy-docther, unless a christian puts a hand round him, an' gives him to her; an' so, if you don't come wid me to-night, an' lay hoult o' this lad, you're a lost an' gone boy, for ever an' ever, an' that's all I have to say to you."

"An' will any other harum come to me, by id?"

"Duoul take you"—Bill began, very angrily.

"Lord forbid!" said Davy, crossing himself.

"Well—no matther whether he does or no; d'you think I'd bring you into harum, afther keepin' you safe an' sound so long? So, say will you come or no?"

"I'll ax my mother on the head iv id."

"Do if you daare! Spake one word to mother, or livin' sowl, an' you'll be crippled to the size o' my fist."

"Oh, Lord save us! Well, if you come an' take me, an' keep me out iv all harum, I'll go wid you."

"That's right! have courage, an', by to-morrow mornin' you'll be your own man agin. To be sure I'll come for you. You'll hear my whistle, at the back o' the cabin, afther nightfall. An' now, here's the mother, an' take care o' your tongue, I bid you." She then entered.

"Hah! have you the balloons, Poll Beehan?"

He received and pocketed the fee. "Well! to-morrow Davy may sit down to the loom wid a light heart—an' so, here goes to be off."

And he quitted the house of waking dreams and superstitious tremblings,—leaving Davy to meditate on the adventure in which he had engaged, and his mother to rock herself backward and forward at the idea of the expense to which Moya Critha's unfortunate passion for her comely son had so unceremoniously reduced her.

During dinner at Hartley Court, Sir Thomas did not make an allusion to the occurrences of the day. The whole conversation, which he nearly engrossed, referred to the unsettled state of the country. His son-in-law elect, respecting the delicate and high-minded feeling that, until all parties stood as they had stood before, would not even name the heiress of Hartley Court, or utter a word which might bring in her name, demeaned himself with a becoming gravity of manner, highly to his advantage in the observant eyes of his host. They separated at a reasonable hour; and the unusually cordial and lengthened pressure of their hands, upon the threshold, was the sole interchange, during the evening, of the thoughts and sentiments that absorbed both.

Slowly, and with none of his usual elasticity of bound, did Sir William seat himself in his saddle. Having passed the avenue-gate of Hartley Court, the reins fell from his hands, his head drooped on his breast, and his horse paced soberly towards home.

At a short distance on, the road was bounded to the right by a copse-wood of oak that sloped down a hill to the Slaney's brink; and to the left, a precipitate acclivity, also thickly clothed with wood, made shadow across the way, even at noon, and now trebled the darkness of, considering the time of the year, a very dark night. Through the almost rayless pass, the animal slackened his pace. Suddenly he plunged backward, and ere his master could snatch up the bridle from his neck, a pair of colossal arms dragged him to the road, and there encircled his body with a grasp of iron.

"Unloose me, villain!" Sir William cried in vain. And vain too were his struggles, his writhings, and bendings, to get free. The bulky carcass of his captor crushed closer against him, at every effort; and the giant arms, passing over his, pinioned him altogether.

"Hould your grip, boy, an' the job is done," said a voice, of which some of the cadences were not unfamiliar to him. Again he struggled, and again the clasping muscles closed tighter round his person. The broad chest heaved quickly against his; the laborious grinding of teeth was at his ear; and the man's chin pressed and forced down his shoulder, until Sir William almost lost the power of motion of any kind.

In a few seconds, he felt other hands catching his wrists; and once more he vainly writhed through every joint, as he asked—"What is the reason of this outrage?—why am I thus seized on?"

"Thonomon duoul! have you id?" said the voice he had heard before, evidently not speaking to him.

The single monosyllable "Yes," came softly in answer.

"On wid it, quick then!" and Sir William felt his hands forced behind him. Horrible fears inspired nature with a last effort: he raised himself upon his toes, and, with all his strength, pushed forward. The heavy carcass that pressed him almost to suffocacation, fell back, with a dead sound, upon the road; but he fell along with it; and still the herculean arms hugged him desperately. And in this situation, notwithstanding continued struggles, Sir William's hands were finally tied behind his back, and his legs also manacled.

"Let go now, my boy; your work is done clane," he heard growled into the ear of the fellow by whom he was held; and instantly the grasp became loosened, and his first captor, allowing him to roll over on the road, slowly arose.

"An' I may go home to my mother now?" said or questioned this person.

"Go your ways, boy, an' snap your fingers at Moya Critha."

"Oh, the Lord be praised!" and Sir William saw the Colossus shamble away from the scene.

"Explain this outrage?" he then cried to the worthies who stood over him.

"Hould your tongue, you spawn o' the duoul! you'll know id afore day-dawn, an' to your cost."

As the speaker ceased, he gave a shrill whistle, and he and his companion stood silently a few paces from their captive. "I perceive you intend something more than robbery."

"An' you may swear that. Bud, Sam, we'll take the offer; come, show us the linin' o' your pockets."

"There was a chuckling assent; and as they stooped over him, Sir William, notwithstanding the dense gloom, and even the precautions the men had taken to disguise their features, thought he recognized a rather well-known countenance. Their plundering search ended, and his suspicions fearfully increased.

"An', so, the duoul have you! would nothin' in the world sarve you bud to come here a-coortin'?"

"Is that my offence?"

"Hah! by the livin' farmer, you'll soon know it is, if a grave can be dug deep in Dunbrody."

"Villain! Now I know your motive, or, rather, the motive of your employer, Talbot!"

"Don't bother no more; wait till you larn. Sam, where's that young thief iv a cadger? sleepin' on the car maybe; so I'll whistle again."

He sounded another shrill call; listened, and heard it answered. "Aye; he's comin' at last. Is the other rope ready?"

"Ready noosed, by the deed," he was answered, in a mild undertone.

"Bud stop," said Bill, again listening; "there's no car afther the horse that's comin' on us!"

"Hollo-a! Where are you?" shouted stentorian lungs at a little distance; and, almost instantly, a horseman trotted briskly up.

"Hell an the duoul!" muttered Bill.

"Help, traveller, help!" cried Sir William Judkin; "help! I lie bound hand and foot by murderous villains!"

"O-ho! is that it?" The rider, a very tall and athletic man, jumped from his saddle. "Then help you'll have, in the name o' God, whoever you are."

In a second, Bill was stuck in his collar; and Sam, twisting off the wooden leg, and standing stoutly upon two of good bone and muscle, poised over the intruder's head, seriously and malignly, the formidable weapon. But, at his first touch, Sir William's champion swung the juggler across the road; and ere Sam could inflict his meditated blow, his leg (strange to say!) was wrested out of his hand, and an agile jump aside scarce saved him from the effects of its agency in the grasp of its new possessor.

"Run for id!" whispered Bill; "no chance this bout!" and darting into the copse that fell to the river, they either concealed themselves near at hand, or easily escaped.

The combatant continued to flourish his weapon in the dark, making the air to whizz at each curve it described round his head, until the prostrate Sir William informed him he had now no enemy to contend with, and requested his assistance in freeing himself from his manacles.

"And, upon my word, that I will do, my poor fellow, if I can find you out," replied his deliverer. "Ay; here you lie; and this part of the proceeding," he continued, as he unknotted or cut the ropes, "is, I believe, more cordial to my vocation than the first part of it; though I hope you will allow, considering my little practice in deeds of arms, that I behaved like a stout soldier. And now, there you are a free man. Come, your hand; stand to your legs and shake yourself; for your coat must be well dusted."

"I have every reason to believe, sir, that you have saved me from being cruelly murdered."

"So much the better, then. The attaining such an end warrants even one of my calling to wield a warlike weapon; and I'm glad it turns out that I engaged on the right side:—a matter which, to tell nothing but the truth, I did not at first take time to consider."

"I judge by your speech, sir, that I have to thank a clergyman for this timely aid?"

"Ay, sir; a priest, as you must know we are distinctively styled:

and, according to the fashion of the times, I am called Priest Rourke by those who, holding us least in love or liking, are the most familiar with us."

"And I am called Sir William Judkin, Mr. Rourke; and, as long as I am so called, your ever grateful friend henceforward."

"O-ho! ay, indeed!" in a jocular tone, as he shook the hand extended to him; "we've heard of the name, Sir William, and in company with another, we believe; why, sir, you and I are old friends, of years standing; half a score such cowards as ran away, just now, should not injure Sir Thomas Hartley's friend in my presence;—that is, when a case of necessity might warrant a poor, big priest in using the bones and sinews God has given him. But what's this that helped me out, in your service, awhile ago? A curious kind of weapon, I protest now: to judge by its feel, and the view afforded of it this dark night, part of a wooden leg, I think."

"Indeed, Mr. Rourke! Let us preserve it, then; it may furnish a clue to the detection of its late owner."

"'Tis so, certainly; here is the end for stumping on the ground, and this screw at the other end must have fastened it to the remainder of the machine: and see here; another spoil," picking up a hat; "and both mine, by all the laws of war!"

"Yet I request both from you, Mr. Rourke; the hat may particularly aid my inquiries."

"Well, I yield them, without any such lengthened contest as took place between the sly Ulysses and the dogged Ajax for the armour of their great bully. Just leave me my weapon, Sir William, while I escort you home, however; there may be another case of necessity for flourishing it in your behalf:—and so, here I go, with a leg under my arm."

"And now, Mr. Rourke, if pressing business does not interfere, you are my guest for the night," said Sir William, as, without farther interruption, they entered his house.

"With all my heart, then. I was only going to see some friends who scarce expect me, so they will not be alarmed if I don't appear, and as my old housekeeper at home saw me set off not to return till morning, she won't be frightened either: your guest I am, therefore, Sir William."

"A most welcome one, Mr. Rourke."

"Well; I am glad I can oblige you and myself, at one and the same time."

They soon sat down to supper.

"And my old friend, Sir Thomas, is so well, you tell me?" said Mr. Rourke, rubbing his hands after a bumper of good claret.

"I left him quite well, an hour ago."

"Heartily glad am I to hear it, Sir William, heartily glad. If

all our gentlemen resembled him, we should not see the poor country in the state it is."

"The times certainly begin to wear a frightful aspect, Mr. Rourke."

"And they will wear a more frightful one, Sir William. Do I speak to a friend of the poor people?"

"You do, sir—and to an enemy of their enemies."

"Then tell me, sir, what are the poor people to do? As in duty bound, the greater number of their priests exert themselves to put down the Northern combination that has crept in among them—but others won't let the priests do their work; the people are set mad—I am set half mad, myself—by the burning and flogging and pitching and hanging that goes on, day after day."

"I believe, Mr. Rourke, that some wise heads promote that very madness by the means you specify, for the purpose of driving the people into detached and futile insurrections, that, so, one collected and well-directed blow may not be levelled at their power."

"What those wise ones mean, I do not understand; but this I understand: whether the story we are told of the Orangeman's oath be true or not, Orangemen act as if it were true—act as if literal extermination of the people was their wish and object. And this I also understand,—that if the people passively submit—if they wait to be all scourged or scalped, or half or whole hanged, or shot, I do not know them, and it will be a wonder to me. Tell me, Sir William!"—he stood up, and looked fiercely on his host,—"which is it better for a man—to die on his own green sod, fighting against his cruel enemies; or stay at home, to be flogged like a negro, or strung up by the blaze of his own cabin?"

Proportioned to his tall, robust, and powerful figure, the speaker had naturally a boldly-marked countenance, with a brow that could frown daringly, and a strong, intrepid eye; yet the mixture of bluff good-humour and blunt candour which ran through his deportment, generally tamed his features and glances into a pleasing expression, and took away from his high carriage and formidable figure all traits of the sternness or ferocity that might otherwise attach to them. In fact, Nature had intended him for a bold, generous soldier, and a mistake had made him a clergyman. And, true to his original impress, Father Rourke, upon the first insurrectionary explosion in the County of Wexford, changed into "Father Capt'n Rourke." Flinging aside, with ease and eagerness, the cumbrous sacerdotal character, he sprang into that which had been his primitive destiny, and became, and continued to be, locally distinguished as the most daring and skilful of the few Roman Catholic priests who, in the year 1798, joined and headed the raging people.

CHAPTER XVII.

Sir Thomas Hartley, quite sincere in his professions to Sir William Judkin, believed that Harry Talbot and Rattling Bill were, generally speaking, acting in concert to prevent the union of his daughter with the young Baronet. He did not, however, so readily conclude, to the utter disgrace and degradation of a person whom he had once called his friend, that, in the particular instance of the charge made upon his rival's character, Talbot uttered what he conceived to be a deliberate falsehood. Sir Thomas rather supposed that the dice-thrower, in the hope of gain alone, was the original author of the slander; and that his patron, blinded and rendered credulous by contending passions, accepted it, without examination, at his hands; and then, in the vague impulse for revenge, rashly communicated it to his unfaithful mistress.

As a preliminary step to the course he intended to pursue, Sir Thomas therefore despatched, at an early hour next morning, a trusty messenger to secure the person of Nale. His own warrant, as a magistrate, was the legal authority for the arrest.

Bill was easily found. He had taken up his abode in one of those humble village hotels which exhibit, in their green glass window of two panes, a couple of dingy loaves of bread, with perhaps an equal number of salt herrings, by way of supporters to the shield, standing on their heads, because their tails would not keep them up; and in the upper pane a tobacco-pipe, forming one side of a triangle, of which another is a tallow-candle of the value of one halfpenny. And over the door of such an establishment may be seen a clumsy piece of board, its ground dim-red, containing white letters indifferently marked thereon, and a third of them mounted, at one side, above the others,—most falsely denoting, that "good beds for travellers" are to be found under the black thatch-roof of the miserable cabin. It might be supposed, indeed, that the proprietor, half ashamed of his announcement, or the artist of being a party to it, had shrunk from stating the falsehood broadly upon the sign-board; and that, therefore, a good portion of the letters thus seemed escaping detection, in order to supply, like ill-worded wills or bonds, in case of the morning remonstrance of a beguiled traveller, a point of legal debate as to the true intent and meaning of the whole declaration. But how far is this away from our purpose.

Without exhibiting the least alarm, or even much surprise, the juggler quietly, and only with a few jeers, suffered himself to be taken prisoner. Then, still according to the instructions of Sir Thomas, he was conducted to the house of a neighbouring magistrate and Captain of Yeomanry, to be dealt with, upon the arrival of the Baronet and his witnesses, as a common vagrant, and disturber of his Majesty's peace. So spoke Sir Thomas Hartley's warrant; and so spoke the private note he addressed to Magistrate Captain Whaley.

If Sir Thomas was regarded by the peasantry as one likely to be their friend in time of necessity, he was by the loyal part of the community considered as any thing but a zealous supporter of Government. It is therefore probable, that his unadmiring brother magistrate might have sent back the case and the offender, for his own exclusive disposal, did it not seem likely that the well-known Rattling Bill would prove to be an important agent of the spreading disaffection. He was accordingly ordered into close custody.

Sir Thomas next wrote to Harry Talbot. The letter stated that Miss Hartley had informed him of the accusation made against Sir William Judkin; and he called upon him, as a man of honour, as a Christian, and as a former friend, to meet him, by a certain hour, at Captain Whaley's, and there submit his proofs of the dreadful assertion. And, having so far taken his measures, Sir Thomas next ordered his horse, and proceeded, according to arrangement, to visit his son-in-law elect.

The young Baronet, and his deliverer of the previous night, had but just breakfasted, when Sir Thomas joined them. Mutual greetings were exchanged between all; and then Sir Thomas learned the attempt upon the person of his young friend, the timely succour of Father Rourke, and every other circumstance. Opinions were passed as to the instigator and perpetrators of the outrage. Sir Thomas shrank from naming Talbot, with reference to the former; but slight doubt existed in his mind, that in the person of Nale he had already secured one of the latter. The wooden-leg gave as yet little light; but the hat, half stuffed with straw and rags, and containing "The London Sheet Lottery" folded up in its crown, proclaimed as loudly as indirect evidence could do, that Bill Nale, along with other misdeeds, had now to account for a brilliant affair of highway robbery.

The priest would be a very necessary witness upon this new charge against the hustling dice-thrower, and he accordingly set out with the two Baronets for the abode of Captain Whaley.

Sir Thomas reckoned but little on the co-operation of this gentleman, either in his capacity of magistrate, or as a man of judgment and intellect. Captain Whaley was indeed one of those to whom, in the absence or disqualification of individuals better fitted for the trust, Irish magisterial authority was heretofore, more so

than at present it is, too often deputed. He could not boast of high descent; neither was he wealthy, nor possessed of much hereditary estate. In early life, at least, he had been but little habituated to the usage or manners of polished society; and, now that an unnatural state of things gave him sudden and unnatural eminence, he did not grace by intellect, by deportment, or by speech, his new station.

In truth, he stood indebted for all his present importance to his zeal and success in raising, from among the dregs of the very loyal of his parish, a yeomanry corps, of which we have before now heard, if we have not seen it—namely, "The poor Ballybreehoone Cavalry." Once dubbed a captain, his commission of the peace followed, in those anomalous times, as a matter of course. And if his personal demeanour did not well agree with his novel rank, neither was his newly-acquired power exercised with that modest and wise temperance which ever confers upon power of every degree its most useful as well as most dignified feature. In Captain Whaley's philosophy, the sweets of power lay in its display; and its best manifestation, in the extent of the terror it inspired. But, after all, he was perhaps, according to the system of his day, an efficient soldier-magistrate.

As our party entered Captain Whaley's handsome mansion, Rattling Bill—his hands thrust into his breast, one leg carelessly flung across the other, and on his head, although worn rakishly to one side, certainly not the same hat he had on when last we saw him—leaned his back against the table in the hall. A scoffing leer twisted his features as he glanced towards the new-comers; and with perfect coolness he slowly withdrew one of his hands, doffed his recently assumed beaver, and bestowing upon each of our friends a separate nod of recognition,—"I'm mighty glad to see your honours brave an' hearty!" he said; and then, replacing the fearless hat, he quietly re-assumed, in all its particulars, his first position.

"Have you ever seen that face before, Mr. Rourke," questioned Sir Thomas aside.

"It was so dark, and the time for investigation so short, I cannot be positive that he is one of my late antagonists; yet I believe he is," answered the priest.

Sir William Judkin, whatever might be his motive, did not yet state the suspicions which, during the occurrence that put him in such peril, we attributed to him.

"But," resumed the priest, "I will ask the worthy a question. I saw you inside a hedge, on the road near Hartley Court, early last night,—did I not, sir?"

"Maybe you did, plase your reverence; though, as you say, the night was dark from the biggin'n, and it's hard to tell. But, likely enough: An there's somethin' like a dhrame come into my head

that I seen you too, last night, arly or late as it may turn out to be."

"We met afterwards, then? You *are* the man that collared me?"

"Hah, hah; be asy now, your reverence."

"Come out o' that, an' none o' your cross-questions," said one of the slovenly-attired, but determined-looking yeomen, who guarded the prisoner.

"Whom do you speak to, fellow?" questioned Father Rourke.

"To a Croppy priest," said another.

The priest drew up his athletic person, flashed from one to another of the speakers a frown of fierce longing and defiance, and then turned on his heel.

"We had best proceed in our business," resumed Sir Thomas. "Pray," addressing a disengaged yeoman, "inform Captain Whaley that Sir Thomas Hartley desires to see him."

As the man with a surly compliance opened a door off the hall, a violent clashing of swords was heard, and between every loud jingle of the weapons a voice, louder and harsher, called out—

"Split the roof of the helmet! Well done, Captain! A chop in the sword-arm! Well guarded, by the great Saizor! (Cæsar). Across the smeller, now! Oh, capital, beautiful!"

"We have heard that voice apologizing for the Ballybreehoone Cavalry at the review," whispered Sir Thomas to the young Baronet.

"Just desire him to walk in," answered Captain Whaley, to the man who announced our party; and as they entered the magisterial room, he yet held in his hand his naked sword; which, however, at their appearance, he sent with a sounding jerk into its scabbard, as if to demonstrate his familiarity with the weapon, or glorying in the noise it made.

"Practising a little at the sword-exercise, Sir Thomas," he said; "we'll have work in hand some o' these days, and soon, I hope; and one must know how to use the blade. Ay, ay! these Croppy dogs will make us busy enough; but we'll tame 'em. Take chairs, gentlemen, take chairs."

The individual with whom the captain had been practising was, indeed, our old acquaintance of somewhat facetious memory in the review-field. At present, however, his appearance was altered for the better. Dressed *cap-à-pie*, as was his commander, in "the clothin'" of which, at our first introduction to him, he had so much bewailed the tardy furnishing and delivery by the tailors, he represented with considerable effect the character of a military person. Nay, he had been a real soldier, a real dragoon, in his early days; and hence his present office of disciplinarian, commencing with its captain, to the Ballybreehoone cavalry. Various were the rumours of the cause of his dismissal from regular service.

Some would not call it dismissal; but rather leave-taking, or, vulgarly, desertion. Others allowed the term to stand, but attributed rank cowardice; others, theft: but, as the real cause was known only to himself, at least among his neighbours, he took credit for his own story—namely, that he had obtained enfranchisement from the duties and responsibilities of a private dragoon, in consequence of a deed of desperate bravery; and that he had preferred honourable retirement, to the offer of a commission in his admiring troop.

"I hope, however, that the opportunity will not soon occur for such desperate use of your weapon, Captain Whaley," said Sir Thomas; in reply to the observation that, in lieu of any other, had greeted his entrance into the apartment.

"Be d——, Sir Thomas! but the opportunity exists this moment. Not a Papist in the county but is in a high fever of disaffection; and they must be bled into loyalty; and that they will be; ha! ha! ha!"—a laugh at his own wit;—"eh, Saunders?"

"I deny your assertion, Captain Whaley," said the precipitate Father Rourke: "every Wexford Roman-Catholic is not a rebel; and such as are, would grow wiser, if treated fairly."

"Who called for your opinion, Sir? Who sent for you? Have you any business with me, I wish to know?"

"Ask those at my side," answered the priest.

"Mr. Rourke is good enough to attend us as a material evidence against a person in your custody, Captain Whaley," said Sir Thomas.

"Oh—ay!—the fellow abroad, I've seen him; I've had an eye on him; I've taken his measure; a rank Croppy, by ——! whatever else may be your charges against him, Sir Thomas. I'd know a Croppy through a fog a mile off; I'd pick him out of a crowd at a fair;—and when you've done with this hero, he has yet to get through my hands, I can tell you—eh, Saunders? By ——! only we waited to show you sport, we'd have given him a taste o' the whipcord an hour ago? eh, Saunders? Saunders, you see, is installed whipcord-master, as well as disciplinarian to my corps, the Ballybreehoone cavalry;—'tis said, he knows by experience, the sore spot between the shoulders: eh, Saunders?"

"Tie him up for me, Captain," said Saunders Smyly, "an' if I don't show him the art, an' tache him to spake, say I never saw a cat flyin' round a triangle."

"Or felt her claws at one—ha, ha!—eh, Saunders? What say you, Father Rourke?—No; but what ails you? Why, you seem to dislike the very name of a cat: though there's many that can't abide the animal, 'ill be better friends with her before long; ha! ha! —eh, Saunders?"

"Ay, by the great Saizor! the Ballybreehoone cavalry 'ill be no

slinkers at home; they'll do duty, or I don't know Capt'n Whaley."

"Right, Saunders: be d—d! but I'll ferrit every Croppy out o' the parish."

"Then you will make more Croppies, Capt'n, than are to be found in the parish," said the priest abruptly and warmly.

"What's that, Sir!" striding up to him; "be d——d, Sir! Priest Rourke, do you threaten me?" He now stood, a foot at least, under the dauntless-looking priest; slapped down, tight on his head, the horsehair helmet he had not taken off at the entrance of our friends; and set his arms a-kimbo. "By ——, Sir! I'd have you to know, I'll listen to no such talk in this house: by ——, Misther Priest! the turn of a hand would make me tache you who you spake to, Sir!"

"Pah! pah!" was Mr. Rourke's answer, as he turned, and, at one or two immense strides, went to look out through the window.

The quick entrance of another captain of yeoman-cavalry postponed the discussion between the zealous loyalist and the half-Croppy priest. It was Talbot, clad, like the soldier-justice, in full uniform, but which, in contrast with the awkwardly ostentatious disposition of that of Captain Whaley, sat gracefully and familiarly on his erect, youthful person, and firm, well-shaped limbs.

The meeting between the rivals was on both sides unexpected. They started at the first view of one another, and interchanged glances which, could they have been concentrated, like the sun's summer rays, through some moral burning-glass, might be supposed, without much metaphorical license, capable of darting, from each to each, a stroke of withering power. Yet these frowning regards were differently characterized. Talbot's expressed steady, profound hatred, and haughty resolution; that of his abhorred enemy, as the colour went and came on his cheeks, was more flashing, more blazing, and, it might be inferred, more eager for, if possible, instantaneous annihilation of its object.

Captain Whaley greeted cordially his young and loyal brother in arms. Mr. Rourke turned from the window during their mutual salutations, again joining his friends.

"Remember your pledge to me;" whispered Sir Thomas to his agitated son-in-law elect,—for he had closely watched the effect produced on him by Talbot's sudden entrance, and justly feared a coming explosion.

Sir William, still following Talbot with a burning, devoting glare, although that person was now constrainedly speaking to Captain Whaley, started at the hint, paused an instant, smiled faintly, and then bowed low in acquiescence.

Talbot began the dialogue.

"You see, Sir Thomas, he said coolly and sternly, "I have complied with your summons, however abrupt it may have been."

"I thank you fo your prompt attendance, Sir," replied the Baronet; "and if the summons was abrupt, so has been the circumstance that made it necessary."

"Well, I grant you as much."

"This, then, is my accuser?" questioned Sir William.

"I am he who charged you with the base intent of deceiving into a mock marriage, while your real wife yet lives, an honourable and spotless lady," answered Talbot.

"Slanderer and liar!" began Sir William; but the voices of Sir homas and Captain Whaley together, interrupted him.

"Be d—d, gentlemen! what's all this? Bad business, by ——! eh, Saunders?—Croppyism at the bottom of it—I'll go bail: eh?"

"Sir William," remonstrated the old Baronet, "I have your solemn pledge to act with temper, dignity, and forbearance; but the words you have spoken do not observe that pledge."

"'Tis better they do not,'" said Talbot; "they are something to remember."

"Do not forget them, then," rejoined his rival.

"You shall judge," answered Talbot.

"Come, gentlemen," continued Sir Thomas, "this is idle. Neither of you,—not even he who stands at my side, as my recent domestic friend, has a claim, a right, to set the issue of our present investigation upon a brawling quarrel. The heiress of Hartley Court is not to be the prize of even a successful gladiator; or, if any one amongst us is entitled to advocate her, I alone am that person. I deny, in Miss Hartley's name, and my own, that, even after some peculiar occurrences, there lives a man, except her father, yet competent to enjoy the honour of being her champion. So patience, Sir William Judkin."

In much humility, and some alarm, the rebuked lover again bowed low. Sir Thomas proceeded briefly to state to the magistrate the nature and particulars of the investigation over which he was called to preside. Scarce had he made an end of speaking, when Captain Whaley broke out—

"What, eh? Captain Talbot says that Sir William is a married man already!—eh? yes; and Sir William denies the fact!—eh? yes, again: then be d—d! there's one sting for another, and nothing else, as yet,—eh, Saunders?"

"Captain Whaley puts the matter just as it stands," remarked Sir Thomas; "and proof of the assertion now becomes necessary."

"Sir Thomas Hartley," said Talbot, "give me a fair hearing. Make some allowances for me, when you hear my statement. In a rash moment, I prematurely made the disclosure. I should have paused, and it was my determination to have paused, in order to gain time for taking steps necessary to its fit and seasonable consideration by you and by the world. Allow me to regret, for the present, my intemperate precipitancy; and, before our inquiry pro-

ceeds further, afford me the time for preparation, which—but that agitation, of a kind not unknown to you, threw me off my guard—I had resolved to afford myself, ere we conversed together on the subject."

While Sir William began to brighten up with anticipated triumph, the person thus appealed to, said—

"Very strange, Mr. Talbot; may I inquire what are the steps to be taken, of which you speak?"

"I answer plainly. As yet, I command no real proofs of the charge, and—"

"Ah!" half screamed Sir William.

"And they cannot be procured, without exertion, time, and trouble."

"Still very strange, sir; making all the allowances I can for you, still very strange, I say. But," continued the Baronet, following up his own first view of the matter, "your charge, we must conclude, though incautiously made in the absence of real, circumstantial proof, *has* been made upon the word of some person you believed you could credit?"

"Precisely."

"A trust-worthy person, of course?"

"I fear not; yet one who, it seems to me, could have had no earthly reason for slandering Sir William Judkin."

"This is still little better, sir," resumed Sir Thomas;—satisfied, however, with the exact squaring, so far, of the facts of the case with his previous judgment;—"your informant, to warrant even your rash assertion, ought, at least, to have been well known and well esteemed by you. But, such as he is, you can produce him?"

"I can, at a second's call; but, if you allow me my choice, I had rather decline, no matter under what opinions, from all that hear me, farther inquiry in this business, until some certain day, which I am ready to name, and upon which I engage to re-appear before Captain Whaley, and stand or fall by the case I shall make out."

"It is not intended to deny you a future opportunity for arranging your full proof, Mr. Talbot; but meantime, having pushed us so far, we must insist, at least, upon being confronted with the man from whose assertion yours is, for the present, exclusively derived."

"*You* push *me*, not I *you*, Sir Thomas. But does the party most interested desire it?"

"I have already called you slanderer and—" his rival began.

"Peace, Sir William!" cried the elder Baronet. "Mr. Talbot, we await your decision."

"Then, Captain Whaley, be good enough to order in the prisoner who waits in the hall," said Talbot deliberately: and again

Sir Thomas saw he had indeed rightly pronounced, in his own mind, upon the excusable, though headlong credulity, of his former friend.

"Oh, the Croppy dog!" cried the magistrate. "What, that fellow! eh?—I guessed it all along. I said it was Croppyism at bottom; didn't I, eh? To be sure, he must appear before us: haul him in here, Saunders."

"One other question, before he enters," continued Sir Thomas, as the disciplinarian withdrew to obey orders. "When this man made to you, Mr. Talbot, his extraordinary assertion, did you not ask him to give particular circumstances—such as the name, family, and residence of the supposed lady?"

"I did; but, for recent and most important reasons, as he alleged, my informant, pledging himself to be explicit at a future time, declined to answer my questions."

"Then, you know no more from him, nor, indeed, from any other quarter, than we know from you."

"Nothing more."

The person so generally alluded to, here made his entrance, followed by Saunders Smyly.

Not the least sign of alarm or embarrassment marked his features or manner. The same leer still played round his mouth, and one of his hands was yet thrust into his bosom. And, to crown his effrontery, his most suspicious new hat still hung at one side of his head, and he lounged into the magisterial chamber without attempting to remove it.

"Sarvent, gintlemen all," he said, seating himself on a chair near the door.

"Off with your hat, you scoundrel!" cried Captain Whaley, darting upon him, and knocking it about the floor. "Aha!" he continued, starting, and staring in some terror at Bill's head—"Be d—d! but I knew I could guess a Croppy: look at the fellow's pole!" seizing and forcing the head forward, and showing the hair cut short behind; while Bill held quietly for the investigation, and when it had ended, and that he again sat upright, the same unaltered, jeering grin was visible on his features.

And here the reader has an explanation of a term applied to the conspirators and insurrectionists of 1798, and used by us in our title-page, though not hitherto explained.

The French Republicans, to distinguish themselves (to a hair, says a punster at our elbow,) from the old aristocratic têtes, clubs, queus, and so forth, first introduced the cleanly, though Revolutionary fashion, of *une tête à la Brutus;* previous to the time of our Tale, it was adopted by (our punster again) the heads of the Irish Republicans: as a mark of brotherhood, it became characterized in the shape of very close-cut polls among their humble adherents; was detected by the opposite party as a badge of disaffection; and

hence "a Croppy," or a man whose hair was sheared close, grew into a synonyme with rebel.

"Out with every word you know, rascal!" continued Captain Whaley, seizing Nale by the collar, and dragging him to his feet from the chair.

"About what, Capt'n?"

"About what? about all this ——— Croppy business, to be sure!—come—spake!"

"By the livin' farmer, I knows no more about id nor the new-born babe; an' if it's the crop you mane, sure that was done while I was asleep."

"I'll find a way to refresh your memory. Saunders, get the cat ready—put the car in the middle o' the field, and let me see you give this fellow the use of his tongue."

"Why, then, I think I'm purty handy at the tongue, widout Saundher's help; bud it's an ould fashion wid me to wag id the way I likes myself; an', not all the cats, or all the dogs along wid 'em, 'ud make me say as mooch as 'good-morrow, Jack,' only jest as is most plasin' to me."

"Quick, Saunders!—What! you Croppy villain!—I'll tache you! —I'll show you!" blustered Captain Whaley, in a real passion.

"Hah!" laughed Bill, turning to Sir Thomas Hartley, as Saunders again left the room, "I b'lieve he thinks he's in arnest."

"Captain Whaley," said the Baronet, as the magistrate now strode about the room, "I have business with this man; allow me to proceed on it, before you deal with him 'on your own account.'"

"Well, Sir Thomas, go on, and I'll deal with him, never fear."

"Hah! hah!" still laughed Bill, again sitting, and stooping his head to enjoy his own jocularity.

"Your name?" demanded Sir Thomas.

"It's me your honour is spakin' to, I b'lieve?" questioned Bill, in his turn; as, sitting at his ease, he bent forward, leaned his elbows on his knees, and, resting the edges of the leaf of his hat upon the tips of the fingers of either hand, slowly swinging it backwards and forwards, and seemed much engaged in observing its motions.

"You," resumed Sir Thomas; "and I require to know your name."

"Why, then, by the hokey-farmer, it's not so asy to come to that, as your honour thinks; becase it's not so asy for a body to tell his name when he has such plenty iv them; for, sometimes they calls me one thing, sometimes another; an' which is which, I lave themselves to say."

"By what name were you baptized?"

"Baptized? anan?"

"Christened, then?"

"Oh, ay! why, then, I b'lieve it's one Terry Mahaffy they chrishened me, if I was chrishened at all—an' I'm amost clane sure that I don't remember whether I was or no."

"What means this fooling, sirrah?"

"Fooling! faith, then, if your honour was goin' to condemn me for a fool, you'd never get my neck in the noose."

"Why act thus, Will?" interposed Talbot; "cannot you answer the question directly?"

"An' so I did; an' do you answer it betther, if you know how, Capt'n. I'd be glad to be tould what's the rason iv axin' me any questions at all?"

"Send him out to Saunders," prescribed the magisterial umpire, "and you'll find him more talkative in a minute or two."

"Maybe some o' ye 'ud say it's too mooch talk I have, afore you've done wid me," said Bill.

"Answer me positively to your name, man," rejoined Sir Thomas.

"If you don't like the name I tould your honour, I'll give you your pick-an'-choose in five more. But what's the use o' my name? can't you ax about the thing your honour wants to know?"

"Well, then, Mr. Talbot, has given you as his authority, for stating that Sir William Judkin is already a married man. You will tell the name and family of his wife, and where she can be heard of."

"An' square Capt'n Talbot says, I tould him, that his honour, Sir William Judkin, was married?" demanded Nale very deliberately.

"Such is his assertion."

"Why, then, by the livin' farmer, I tould him no sich thing."

"How!" exclaimed the young Baronet.

"Villain!" roared Talbot, losing all his former self-command,—"execrable villain! is it thus you betray me?"

"Bother, Capt'n, there's no use in *balourin'** this way; an' won't tell a lie to plase any body—barrin' myself."

"Gracious heavens, Henry Talbot!" said Sir Thomas, now deficient in his last link of anticipations, "can this be possible? You have not even the word of this wretch for your assertion? and what are we to say, or think?"

"By the Judge above me!" shouted Talbot, "he utters the veriest falsehood that ever fell from villain's mouth."

"Hah! does your honour hear the poor young Capt'n now?"

"Our inquiry has ended," resumed Sir Thomas;—"ended, so far as concerns you, Sir William, as I expected; but, as concerns you, Mr. Talbot, *not* as I expected. Misguided young man, I pity you."

* Making a noise.

"Keep your pity for those who seek or require it, Sir Thomas; keep it for yourself. As to yon high-crested braggart, this, indeed, is his day of triumph; but mine will come—will come!" he repeated, raising his voice, and stamping vehemently,—"the day when, for his acts to others, as well as for his words to me, I shall crush him, thus!—thus!—beneath my feet!—And, Sir Thomas Hartley, the day that will make you think of this day with horror! No more now. My presence here is not longer necessary;—good morning, Captain Whaley!" And the baffled rival of Sir William rushed, almost foaming, out of the room.

"Hah!" still laughed Bill; his chuckle coming in, amid the storm of human passion, like that of a malicious fiend.

"Be d——d!" remarked Captain Whaley; "for as loyal a man as he is, Talbot has got through this business most shamefully."

"And now, Captain," resumed Sir Thomas, "we have to prefer a more serious charge against this person," pointing to Nale.

"There isn't a thought of his mind I won't know, in a hand's turn," said the Captain.

"Faith, your honour! an' if that comes to pass, you'll know more than people 'ud think by lookin' at me."

"Sir William Judkin, sir, was set upon last night by three fellows, who dragged him from his horse, bound him hand and foot, robbed, and threatened to murder him."

"An' so he was," observed Nale; "an' I tell you he had a great escape; 'twas ten chances to one between a grave an' a feather-bed for him last night."

Sir Thomas stared at the fellow, who thus seemed preparing to admit the coming accusation against him.

"Sir William himself has not spoken to the identity of any of the parties—"

"Not yet," interrupted Sir William, "but hear me now. This morning I had not a notion on the subject; yet, since we have been introduced to the person before us, impressions made upon me at the moment of the outrage, and since forgotten, are called up by his appearance, voice, and manner; and, at present, I am morally assured he was one of the assassins."

"Why, then, I was only wondherin' what kept your honour's memory back so long," said Nale: and perhaps, recollecting all that has passed, the readers will join in Bill's astonishment.

"I came up by accident, Captain Whaley," said Mr. Rourke, "just in time to give help: two of the ruffians attacked me, and one of them is, I believe, now before me."

"Hah!" put in Bill, "only for your reverence, and your good four bones, it's a truth that the clay o' Dunbrody 'ud now be stoppin' his breath."

"Villain!" cried Sir William, "you make the very same horrible allusion which you made when I was bound at your feet."

"Does your honour think so?"

"We have other proof, Sir," continued Sir Thomas: "a hat was picked up on the spot, by Mr. Rourke, which we can identify as his."

"Ay; ay; every thing coming home against the Croppy-dog," said the magistrate. "We'll commit him for trial, after I've settled my own account with him;—that is, if I do not pay him in full for all accounts;—ay, and be d—d! but here comes Saunders to tell me the car is ready."

"Well," answered Nale, "sure there's enough about id, up an' down: an' see here; I don't care an ould fig for the whole o' ye;" suddenly starting up, and changing his manner from the sneering buffoon to the daring bravo,—"I'll tell you the long and the short iv id, Capt'n," speaking aside. "They have no proof I was at the nate caption iv that bould blood, there; it's all nothin' but guess: an', whether I was or no, the duoul send 'em knowledge; so I want to be goin' about my business—but I'll spake to you afore I go."

He suddenly darted to the door, and was in the hall in an instant. Captain Whaley pursued him close. But it was not Bill's intention to attempt an escape. He saw that such a measure was impracticable. Our astonished party, thus left alone in the magisterial chamber, expected to hear a scuffle abroad. No such thing occurred. Sir Thomas Hartley stepped into the hall. The Captain and Bill, he was informed, had quietly retired into another room, whither we will introduce the reader to witness part of the mystery that went forward.

"Well, 'tis read through an' through, your honour?" asked Nale, alluding to a paper the Captain held in his hands.

"Yes, ay; be d—d! you are a useful man, I see. Have you done much since you came to this part o' the counthry?"

"A little:—tell me, Capt'n, what's the rason you'd be listenin' to stories from sich as are vidin' there? We all know what the big priest is made iv; but did it never cross your mind, that Sir Thomas an' his son-in-law, that's to be, knew a little o' the sacrets o' the time?"

"The old Croppy, I've long suspected; of Sir William, much is not whispered."

"An' yet there's one or two that thinks he'd have no objections to mount "the green," if he saw things turning up for id: th' ould grandfather didn't lave him many o' the acres clear o' charges, in one sort or another; an' a day like the day that's comin', might pay all debts an' bonds, or gain him some new acres that 'ud have nothin' to pay."

"Right, by ——! I'll keep an eye on him."

"There isn't another Capt'n in Waxford County I'd budge to; but I'll put it in *your* way to do more than the whole o' them to-

gether. Not a Croppy, next or near, bud I'll scent out for you. What does your honour think iv comin' this blessed night, right a-head upon a barrell-bag full o' pikes?"

"Where, eh? be d—d! a fine thing—a fine thing for the Ballybreehoone Cavalry—eh? where are they to be found?"

"I'll be back to you afther night-fall wid the whole story; now I moost go look at 'em agin, to see if they're safe, as I left 'em."

"I'll reward you handsomely—"

"Well; we b'lieve Masther Saundhers may keep his cat an' her kittens for them that wants 'em, now;—an', Capt'n, the first job to be done, the moment I lave you, is to see some o' the boys, an' give 'em a little thrate; an', by the livin' farmer! I haven't as mooch as 'ud pay for a thimble-full."

"Here is a guinea—earnest, only, of your fair reward, when you merit it. How soon do we meet again?"

"About the dusk, I tould your honour," answered Bill, buttoning up his guinea; "an' I moost always come in the dark, an' by the back way, too—the same way your honour 'ill let me out now, for rasons plain to be seen."

"Yes—follow me."

And accordingly Captain Whaley led his new ally to the back entrance of the house.

Our friends were not without suspicions of the nature of the private conference between him and the wretch Nale; and therefore did not feel utter astonishment when, in a few moments, the captain reappeared before them, saying, in his most magisterial and decided tone and manner, "I do not think it necessary, Sir Thomas, to follow up this obscure business any farther."

"Indeed? may I ask your reasons, Captain?"

"Reasons I have; good ones, too."

"Has not the man been charged with murder?"

"Without proof."

"Did he not almost confess his guilt?"

"I do not think so."

"And your reason for allowing him to escape us, is, because you do not think so?"

"That, and other private ones, not to be questioned, Sir Thomas. I will attend no farther to the case."

"Is this justice?" demanded Father Rourke; "to screen a murderer because he turns informer!"

"Priest Rourke, you'll have enough to do to look to yourself: be d——d, Sir! I tould you as much before."

"Oh, good morning to your Captainship;" and the priest strode of the room.

"Such conduct I cannot regard but as disgraceful," resumed Sir Thomas.

"And *you* may as well take care o' your own conduct, Mr. Baronet Hartley."

"What! no redress for me against a common assassin?" asked Sir William.

"And I'd advise you too, my young grandee, to have a care o' yourself."

"In my estimation, as well as Sir Thomas's, you stand disgraced, Sir."

"Little caring how I stand in the estimation of either o' you." And so terminated the interview.

Upon this day, as well as the former, Sir William dined at Hartley Court; but not *tête-à-tête* with its master. Sweet is food to him that hungers; drink to him that thirsts; rest to him that is weary; "pleasure after pain;" safety after danger; sunshine after storm; but sweeter than any of these, or all of them together, is the reconciliation of young and ardent lovers whom doubt yields to confidence; and the terror of eternal separation is replaced by the hope of eternal union. And this most delicious of earthly enjoyments did the young Baronet now experience. Again, a hand softly pressed his, which he had feared was estranged from him for ever. Again, he was permitted to salute a cheek (we only say a cheek) which he had feared to see flame against him in indignation, but which now revenged with love's own blush alone the tolerated freedom. Again, eyes met his in smiles and sparkling, which during the separation and doubts of only a few hours, sickening fancy had begun to glaze with coldness and aversion beneath his glance; harmonious cadences again tingled in his ears, which he had thought never to have heard more; and, the delicious evening long, he sat, imbibing through every perception the reflux of such a tide of happiness, as, fully to the observation of Sir Thomas, and to the sympathy of Miss Alice, left him incapable of little else than surrendering himself to its influence.

CHAPTER XVIII.

We have intimated that the mysterious abode of Poll Beehan and her son Davy stood on the declivity of a hill which overlooked the village lying nearest to Hartley Court; this village was one of the poorest class, chiefly consisting of the miserable hovels in which the labouring poor of Ireland drag on their lives of privation. Altogether, the number of dwellings did not exceed twenty.

But, as in all society, no matter how small, there is a gradation; so, even our humble hamlet had its more fashionable ("dacent") quarter.

A few houses of some appearance of comfort, and grouped together, claimed precedence over the straggling huts of the poorer order. Peter Rooney's mansion was among them; having a four-paned sash-window at either side of the door, besides another in the gable to light his workshop; exhibiting the thatch at top tastefully mitred, and otherwise ornamented; and flaming in an annual coat of yellow-wash, with around the windows, edges of white.

But that abode over which Shawn-a-Gow presided, was first in place as in extent. It stood contiguous to the cross-roads, was of long existence, and although the hamlet could not afford to the compound establishment the means of becoming wealthy, in the true sense of the word, still Shawn had a large share of custom, both as a smith and a vender of strong liquors. Of two or three humble taverns, such as that in which Bill Nale had lately been found, none ever called themselves the rivals of the Gow's. A public-house, putting in strong claims, stood indeed at the other end of the hamlet; but its straw-stuffed casements, and a few broken-necked decanters, connected to the fragments of the glass of the window, by cobwebs of long standing, visibly indicated that the liquor to be found under its roof, was not deemed of equal flavour with that sold by Mrs. Delouchery.

The proprietor of this rival establishment was a young widow, not yet five-and-twenty, whose brow of chilly hopelessness told her despair of success in her unpromising attempt for a livelihood. Between her expression, and the device of her faded signboard, there might appear some analogy. Two curiously-shaped birds stood tiptoe thereon, at either side of a sheaf of wheat, each holding in his beak an ear of the corn, properly bent down by the artist for his accommodation; and the poor landlady appeared to have as little prospect of realizing her hopes of fortune, as the pigeons, crows, or whatever they were, of swallowing the grain thus held quietly between their bills the year round.

Circumstances have changed, however. That very widow now stands a plump, consequential personage, (no longer widow, by the way,) at the door of a well-supplied and well-frequented country ale-house; occasionally observing to her customers, in reference to the rebellion of 1798, that it certainly was a fearful time, yet that "'tis an ill wind that blows nobody luck;" her brow of despondency has changed into one of self-content, and some importance; iron-bars protect her house from thieves; its interior bespeaks cheery comfort, and, in fact, it is the head hotel of the little village; while of Shawn-a-Gow's mansion not one stone stands upon another, and of Shawn-a-Gow himself there is scarcely a recollection.

It was night, and contrary to the law which prohibited persons from leaving their dwellings after night-fall, Peter Rooney, and two neighbouring small farmers, sat, with the proprietor, in Shawn-a-Gow's tap-room. They knew, that if detected in their stolen conference, they incurred the penalty of transportation; yet men will, at all hazards, indulge their inclination for the interchange of opinion upon subjects of common interest. They also recollected the hideous catalogue of punishments which hung over them for having become connected with the conspiracy of the day; and their manner was consequently constrained and cautious, and their discourse pursued in that subdued tone which implies danger in the topic.

Peter Rooney appeared dressed in a more homely suit than that in which he had honoured the meeting of the Upper baronial. It was, indeed, diligently held together, on the saving maxim, "a stitch in time, saves nine;" one always recollected by Peter, in reference to his own attire, though seldom recommended to his customers. But he still mounted his full-bottomed, sleek-crowned, yellow wig; and a clean plaited stock, ever hung up while he sat at work, gave him an air of much decency. Upon a principle never lost sight of, namely, that of making as much of his person as he did of his understanding, he sat very erect in his chair.

Opposite to him, at the end of a long deal table, was Shawn-a-Gow; with his tangled, black hair, and his black beard of half a week's growth, rendered even blacker by the atoms that, constantly flying from his forge, had nestled in it. He bent forward, and stretched his great brawny arms their full length along the table —a position, to him, of absolute rest; and the knuckles of his ponderous and dingy fists met together, enclosing a space within which was a two-handled pot of ale, thus formidably guarded. The others were also provided with ample measures of liquor.

"I tell ye, 'tis as thrue as that the wig is on my head, or my head on my shoulders," said Peter Rooney, continuing a previous discourse: "Peg Kelly, the beggar, came puffin' wid the news, to-day mornin'; an' I sent the tidins, hot-foot, an'-never-hould, by Joan Foley, to the stone pound; an' I'll go bail there isn't many in Waxford County but has the news by this time."

"Did they do mooch good?" asked the Gow.

"I tell you," answered Peter in a whisper, "the Kildare boys was up, for the counthry an' the green, an' aginst the orange, like brave champions; an' the lads o' Carlow County is on the sod, wid the same bould attempt; an' the brave County Wicklow boys, too."

"You tould that afore," said Shawn.

"It was just the mornin' o' yestherday that the Kildare throops came pourin', like the storm o' wind, into Naas town."

"You're talkin' o' King George's soldiers," again interposed the smith.

"I'm spakin o' the throops o' the Union, Jack."

"Call 'em by their right name o' Croppies, an' then we'll undherstand you."

"That's a name put on us for scorn, Jack Delouchery; an' the right name o' the brave boys is throops o' the Union, or o' the Irish Army o' Freedom. They came into Naas town, I bid ye, shoutin' like hearties, wid their long pikes afore 'em, an' the sodiers' bullets flew like hail among 'em, an'—"

"Did they bate the sodiers?"

"They fought like haroes o' the ould time, bud were forced to run."

"Well; there's an end o' that story."

"The Kildare boys made slaughther in Claine, an' in the town o' Prosperous they killed their Orange murdherers; two hundhred red-coats they sthretched in the sthreets; an' a hundhred Welsh throopers tumbled from their saddles wid Irish holes through their bodies."

A story seldom loses in the carriage; and Peter has here greatly exaggerated the number of the slain.

"There's somethin' in that talk," said the smith.

"A regiment o' dhragoons, horses an' all, was laid prosthrated on the commons o' Kilcullin." Peter went on, still exaggerating; "the County Carlow done their best agin Hacketstown an' Monsthereven; and the Wicklow harties darted their pikes through the orange at Sthratford. Ould Ireland is up for liberty; an' her thrue sons 'ill have the upper hand o' them that 'ud be her murtherers."

"An' here, in Waxford County, they're waitin' to be murthered, out-an'-out, the moment the news you are tellin' us comes to the Orangemen's ears," said one of the small farmers. Some difference of opinion followed the remark. It was said that utter terror kept the men of Wexford quiet. The farmer reported that, upon the morning of the present day, twenty-five peasants and others had been shot, "in a batch," at a village called Cullen, and that this and the like vigorous measures frightened the people into stupefaction.

The second stranger mentioned that the magistrates of the county had issued a proclamation, promising pardon and safety to all who, by a certain day, should come in with their pikes, and swear allegiance to King and Government; and it was his opinion that, if this covenant were kept with the people, the County of Wexford would remain quiet, and ought to remain quiet.

"They only want our pikes to kill us the asier;" said Shawn-a-Gow.

"An' its plain to be seen they don't mane to hould to their word wid us," said Peter Rooney; "for not stoppin' their hands to let

us do what they ax iv us, by a certain day, sure they're floggin', an' burnin', an' killin', as busy as if they never sent out that paper."

"An' not a lash less, or a cabin less, or a life less, 'ill be given or spared afther the pikes is taken from us, but the conthrarywise," resumed Jack.

"But who's to give the word?" asked one of the farmers.

"There wouldn't be them wantin' that 'ud know what they'd be about," said little Peter, smoothing down his wig, and looking as like a commander as he could.

"Phoo; I see it's a botched job," rejoined Shawn: "divil a head or tail it has, an' that's plain to be seen."

"No one ever had thrue rason to throw the word botch on me, Jack Delouchery," answered Peter, now dragging down his wig, as he took to himself the reproach cast upon the manager of this ill-contrived plot: we speak with reference to the County of Wexford.

"There's botchin' in more ways than one in it, too," resumed the Gow, now heeding him; "ye have informers and spies among ye, I tell ye; what other way could that murtherin' Whaley come sthraight upon them that's concarned, as well as them that's not concarned, in the business?"

"It's a sore pity, an' a thing to be fretted at, if he doesn't be ped back, for all his doins, in his own coin," observed Peter.

"The orange bloodhound!" ejaculated Shawn; "'twould be worth a pitch head-foremost into kingdom-come, to have one good hoult iv him in a right place:" and his voice sank into its most husky tones, as he strongly clenched his two monstrous black fists, raised them slowly from the table, and then let them gradually descend, until, with the completion of his fancied picture of revenge, they fell heavily and crashingly on the board.

"Bud what's that?" he asked in a quick whisper, as a thundering knock came to the door—"spake o' the duoul, and he'll appear!" snatching up the candle, and placing it under the table.

"The yeomen, father dear, I'm amost sure!" cried Kitty, running in alarmed; while, as the knocking grew louder and louder, her mother stood staring about her in the kitchen.

"Bridget!" cried Jack in a low voice, of which, however, the tones were so awful to the good dame's ear, that she was at his elbow in an instant—"do you keep 'un talkin', for a start, till we get out, back'ard—Kitty, give the best help you can."

"There came no horsemen to the door, Jack," said Peter Rooney, very coolly; "wouldn't it be good sense to wait an' see who's outside?"

"Ax 'em a question, Bridget," ordered Shawn.

"What 'ud ye be plased to want this hour o' the night?" demanded the poor woman, in a tremulous voice.

"Mother, mother! open the door, quick!" she was answered.

"Why, that's Tom, isn't id?" questioned Jack.

"Yes, father, yes—open, open!"

"Stop your hand a minute," interposed Peter Rooney, as the smith strove to undo the door,—"let one that has a well-hearin' ear talk a little to the body abroad."

"Phoo!—stand back, Pether—hasn't a father a good right to know his boy's voice?"—and the door was quickly opened, and Jack's son, a lad of eighteen, decently attired, as his accent and manner were decent, rushed in, pale and out of breath.

"What's this for, Tom?" questioned his father, in a struggle between reprimand and affection, while he held out his hand to his darling offspring; and the rather inconvenient pressure experienced by the youth might have told him that, notwithstanding his words and tone, the rough smith was glad to see him.

"Another time, father, I'll tell you how I heard the news," answered the lad, in great alarm—"but now, run, run! Whaley and his yeomen are at my heels—they spur to seize on you while I am talking!"

"Then, Tom, there's no time for talkin'. Bridget,"—clutching her arm—"clear the chest, if you can;—Pether Rooney, run out an' warn the neighbours—quick, quick, man!" Peter obeyed. "Connors, an' you, Kavanah, help to rouse 'em out,—if a man kind is caught, he'll be flogged—hurry, hurry!" And they, too, left the house.

"Father, you've been making pikes I hear," said his son to him, aside.

"They're in a hidin'-hole, my boy, undher the anvil-block, that's fastened in a way no one knows but mysef;—out, you, too, Tom; stand on the road, beyant the village, an' listen well to hear these murtherers comin'."

The lad accordingly left him. The buzz of hurry and confusion was indistinctly heard in the village. The quick but not loud knock went from door to door. In a few brief and whispered words the inmates learned the approaching danger; and some rushed forth, but half attired, only attentive to personal safety; some, in their headlong haste, endeavoured, with muttered threats or intreaty, to force out their families; some snatched at whatever was most valuable in their dwellings; and some, afraid to fly, crept into hiding-places; and, in a very short space of time, nearly the whole population, except some feeble women, or bed-ridden old men, or fear-stricken children overlooked by their parents, in the bustle and the darkness, were silently and stealthily speeding out of the hamlet. Half-way to their place of refuge, the galloping of horses came on their aching ears; and at the sound the half-clothed mother tried to stifle the cry of her startled infant, which she dared not stop to soothe into quietness; or the whispering inquiry

after friends not seen by friends, amid the throng; and the subdued warning to "stale asy, stale asy," were the only accents of communication interchanged between the fugitives.

The hill that has been mentioned as rising above the village, ran some distance beyond it; and its summit, and the greater portion of the descent, were rocky and barren, only nurturing patches of dwarf furze, and spare grass, that the furze checked as it struggled into growth. At the side turned from the village, it was clothed, however, with oak and ash-trees; which inserting their fibrous roots between rocky clefts, drew from the meagre soil a sustenance scarce to be expected. A little streamlet, fringed with green turf, flowed by the foot of this declivity; and a lesser hill, more recently but more thickly planted, also arose from its edge; so that here was a secluded little glen, shut out at every side from observation. And hither came the inhabitants of the village, to crouch beneath the concealing foliage, and in the panting silence of extreme fear, until their dreaded enemies should have passed away.

The frightened hare, when she has gained some distance from her pursuers, will pause, sit up, and lift her ears in the direction whence she apprehends danger; and so, after a pause of consternation, the closely-couched people began to question each other, and to start opinions or conjectures in more audible tones. Inquiries ran through them, as to the presence of members of their separate families; and low wailings, interrupted by sudden calls to attention, arose within the little shadowed solitude, as the mother missed her offspring, or the daughter her parent. But the nearer and nearer noise of the galloping horsemen, distinct through the mild silence of slumbering Nature, soon hushed every breath; and, in the eager pause of fearful anticipation, every bosom became self-occupied.

Shawn-a-Gow, clutching his son by the arm, had led on the body of fugitives. Arrived at the turfy margin of the silent and almost invisible streamlet, he caused him to sit down; and then commanding him not to stir till he should return, the smith, accompanied by the intrepid little Peter Rooney, ascended the wooded hill, gained the summit which overlooked the village, descended a little on the other side, and there, lying flat among a clump of furze, both cast down their looks to note the proceedings of the invading yeomen.

No moon hung in the heavens; yet, though it was now the noon of a summer night, darkness, such as swathes the moonless nights of winter, did not reign around or below. Objects continued vaguely visible in the hamlet, and to eyes long familiar with their shape, place, and other identifying features, could not be confounded with each other.

The watchers on the hill heard the thronging tramp of the horses' feet on the road to the right, past the hamlet. With in-

creasing clamour they heard them enter the straggling street, if so it might be called, and drive along that quarter where the poorer cabins were situated; and as they passed beneath, the swinging of the iron scabbards against the stirrups was loudly audible, and their closely-formed array, just a mass of shade deeper than that which surrounded it, became undefinedly visible.

They proceeded towards the more respectable houses. Shawn-a-Gow raised his head above its screen of furze, and, with a muttered curse, saw them draw up, in obedience to the word "Halt!" before his own dwelling. There was a loud jingling of their arms and accoutrements as the men jumped from their saddles; then a score of voices cried, "Open!" and then he could hear the breaking in of his own door.

He judged that some entered, while the rest repaired to other houses in the village: for, crash after crash, echoed from different points, followed by imprecations and threats of future vengeance, as the enraged party ascertained the flight of the former inmates. But quickly were blended with their high and angry tones the cries of some few who, through fear or accident, had not joined the fugitives, and who were now dragged from their hiding-places, to the upper end of the street, where stood the commander directing the proceedings.

And still much bustle went on before his own house. Lights glanced backward and forward, just touching, with gleaming outlines, the forms of those who bore them. He concluded they were searching and rifling his dwelling; and after some pause, Shawn raised himself higher from his concealment, to ascertain if the feeble wailings of a woman's voice did not mingle with the louder vociferation of the yeomen. But he mistook; or else the tones became fainter, or were lost in the general uproar.

"They're at their work," he said to Peter Rooney, in a cadence resembling the growling bellow of the bull, half terror, half a thirst for vengeance, when the tearing dogs have at last obtained the gripe that tames him.

"The night o' the great slaughter is come," answered Peter: "whisht! that's Whaley's voice above the rest; they have some o' the poor neighbours cotched."

The words "Tie him up!" were those to which Peter directed Shawn's attention, pronounced by the commander in a loud pitch of voice.

"An', d'you hear, Shawn? they're dhraggin the crature along—an' it's Saundhers Smyly, the ould throoper, that's callin' out 'Croppy rascal.' "

Shawn raised his head again, as he asked, "Isn't that like Bridget's cry among 'em? An' didn't I see her thrudgin wid the rest o' the women? Blood an' furies no; now I recollect, she went back to get away the last o' the papers."

"They won't do harum upon her," said Peter Rooney.

"*I*'ll go back for *her*," resumed the smith.

"You'll do no sich thing, Jack Delouchery; have you a mind to give yoursef up into their hands, an' lose us the sthrongest arum an' one o' the bravest hearts o' the Waxford throops o' the Union! Lie down, man! lie down, I bid you!" continued Peter, with an energy that was natural to him, and that often had its effect upon his most colossal friends, as Jack half started up—"down wid your head, an' lie close; is there no concarn on your mind for us all, if you won't take care about yoursef? Wouldn't the sighth o' you, walkin from this, tell them where to find every mother's soul iv us? Maybe it isn't Breedge; or, supposin' it is, they have no business wid a woman; an' an ould mother iv a woman 'ill get no other hurt among 'em, divils as they are, I tell you; so, asy, Shawn, asy; she's only cryin' out becase she's frightened."

"Poor fool of a crature," muttered Shawn, as he obeyed Peter's commands, and again lay flat—"she's yowlin to think that she'll be a beggar in her ould days. Whisht!"—a second time rising on his knee,—"what's that Whaley is sayin' now?"

"Avoch, Shawn!—light it up, light it up, is his word," answered Peter.

"By the Eternal!" said Shawn, at last fully starting to his feet, "my house is a-fire, blazin' up to give the hell-hounds light!"

"The Lord help you! 'tis blazin', sure enough," said Peter.

The smith kept a brooding and gloomy silence; his almost savage yet stedfast glare fastened upon the element that, not more raging than his own bosom, devoured his dwelling. Fire had been set to the house in many places, within and without; and though at first it crept slowly along the surface of the thatch, or only sent out bursting wreaths of vapour from the interior, or through the doorway, few minutes elapsed until the whole of the combustible roof was one mass of flame, shooting up into the serene air, in a spire of dazzling brilliancy, mixed with vivid sparks, and relieved against a background of dark-grey smoke.

Sky and earth appeared reddened into common ignition with the blaze. The houses around gleamed hotly; the very stones and rocks on the hill-side seemed portions of fire; and Shawn-a-Gow's bare head and herculean shoulders were covered with spreading showers of the ashes of his own roof.

His distended eye fixed too upon the figures of the actors in this scene, now rendered fiercely distinct, and their scabbards, their buttons, and their polished black helmets, bickering redly in the glow, as, at a command from their captain, they sent up the hill-side three shouts over the demolition of the Croppy's dwelling. But still, though his breast heaved, and though wreaths of foam edged his lips, Shawn was silent. And little Peter now feared to address a word to him. And other sights and occurrences

claimed whatever attention he was able to afford. Rising to a pitch of shrillness that over-mastered the cheers of the yeomen, the cries of a man in bodily agony struck on the ears of the listeners on the hill, and looking hard towards a spot brilliantly illuminated, they saw Saunders Smyly vigorously engaged in one of his tasks as disciplinarian to the Ballybreehoone cavalry. With much ostentation, his instrument of torture was flourished round his head, and though at every lash the shrieks of the sufferer came loud, the lashes themselves were scarce less distinct.

A second group challenged the eye. Shawn-a-Gow's house stood alone in the village. A short distance before its door was a lime-tree, with benches contrived all round the trunk, upon which, in summer weather, the gossipers of the village used to seat themselves. This tree, standing between our spectators and the blaze, cut darkly against the glowing objects beyond it; and three or four yeomen, their backs turned to the hill, their faces to the burning house, and consequently their figures also appearing black, seemed busily occupied in some feat that required the exertion of pulling, with their hands lifted above their heads. Shawn flashed an inquiring glance upon them, and anon a human form, still, like their figures, vague and undefined in blackness, gradually became elevated from the ground beneath the tree, until its head almost touched a projecting branch, and then it remained stationary, suspended from that branch.

Shawn's rage increased to madness at this sight, though he did not admit it to be immediately connected with his more individual causes for wrath. And now came an event that made a climax for the present to his emotions, and at length caused some expressions of his pent-up feelings. A loud, crackling crash echoed from his house; a volume of flame, taller and more dense than any by which it was preceded, darted up to the heavens; then almost former darkness fell on the hill-side; a gloomy, red glow alone remained on the objects below; and nothing but thick smoke, dotted with sparks, continued to issue from his dwelling. After every thing that could interiorly supply food to the flame had been devoured, it was the roof of his old home that now fell in.

"By the ashes o' my cabin, burnt down before me this night—an' I stannin a houseless beggar on the hill-side, lookin' at id—while I can get an Orangeman's house to take the blaze, an' a wisp to kindle the blaze up, I'll burn ten houses for that one!"

And, so asseverating, he recrossed the summit of the hill, and, followed by Peter Rooney, descended into the little valley of refuge. Coming to the spot, by the streamlet's verge, where he had left his son, Shawn cast an inquiring look upon the turf, and then sat down by a reclining figure, which he assured himself was the object of his anxiety. But the smith spoke no word. His head sank to his chest, and he remained in moody thought.

Nearly at the moment he withdrew over the hill, Sir Thomas Hartley came upon the scene Shawn-a-Gow had been regarding. From the windows of his chamber the Baronet had caught the vivid light of the conflagration, and even the shouts of the yeomen reached his ears, so still was the lonely night. He ordered his horse, and soon gained the village.

Pushing up to the ruins of the smith's house the yeomen appeared engaged pretty nearly in the same manner as when Shawn had taken his last look of them. One party surrounded a thorn-bush parched by the recent blaze, to the knotted stem of which was tied Saunders Smyly's victim. The powerful shrieks of the sufferer had sunk into hoarse and feeble cries. His strength had become exhausted from the continuance of the punishment; and as at each infliction his face turned over his shoulder to meet that of his torturer, its expression was such as humanity would weep at, and almost such as misbecame a creature wearing the form of man.

Sir Thomas's heart sickened, but his usually mild nature also fired at the view. He quickly descended from his horse, and seizing Smyly by the throat—"Desist, scoundrel!" he cried; "the man can endure no more."

"Ballybreehoone cavalry! dhraw swords!" exclaimed Saunders, startled at the suddenness and energy of the assault; for, in truth, he was a very coward. His orders were obeyed, and Sir Thomas was rudely pushed away.

"Your captain," he demanded, "where is he?" as the victim, gaining a moment's relief, turned a mournfully imploring eye upon the Baronet, with, "Oh, Sir Thomas, save me, save me! an' bid 'em to bring me one little dhrop o' wather—the dhrooth is choakin' me!"

Sir Thomas's question was but rudely answered; the men pointed, however, to the group around the lime-tree, and thither he rushed to seek Captain Whaley.

But here a scene of surpassing horror awaited him. As he approached the tree, the figure which Shawn-a-Gow had seen slowly elevated, was for the second time let down, only half deprived of life, however, in order that Captain Whaley might, if possible, wring from the convulsed lips and bewildered senses of the victim, confessions regarding a conspiracy with which he had no connexion, and also regarding the place to which his father had recently fled. For the smith, when he returned from the hill, did not sit down by the side of his son.

After having been left alone at the stream in the dell, the boy had looked round to greet his mother; he saw her not. He arose, and went among the groups of villagers, inquiring for her. The trembling people informed him that she had turned back to her house, to secure some important papers. Disobeying, or not re-

membering his father's commands to await his return without stirring, the affectionate and anxious lad set out, by the way all had come to the glen, in search of his mother. The moment he appeared in the village, the yeomen made him prisoner; and the reader knows the result.

The parent for whom he had unhesitatingly risked his life, now sat on the ground, near to him, as, at Sir Thomas's approach, he was a second time lowered to attend to the questions of Captain Whaley. Though Shawn-a-Gow had indeed heard shrieks, when her darling was first dragged to the tree, the mother did not now utter a cry or a groan. Her knees were crippled up to her mouth, her arms and clasped hands encircled them, and she gazed around with a vague and unspeculative eye, utterly silent. It was no wonder that her mind, never of a strong cast, should, at the sights she had seen, have quite failed her.

Captain Whaley was engaged in a critical examination of the lad's spasmed features, in order to ascertain whether or not the vital spark had sufficiently returned to permit of farther appeals to the senses and the understanding of his subject.

"He's gone in arnest now, Captain, I believe," said one of the men, while something like alarm tempered the grim smile that accompanied his words.

"No such thing," answered the Captain; "these Croppies have the lives of cats; it takes a long time to kill 'em."

His judgment proved correct. Convulsive heavings agitated the boy's bosom; his limbs quivered to the touch of returning life; a long moan escaped him; and when he was placed against the tree, slowly, and with seeming pain, his eyes opened, staring around wildly and haggardly, as if frightful visions met them at every glance.

At this moment Sir Thomas Hartley came up. "Gracious God, Captain Whaley!" he cried, starting back; "is it by such acts as these you hope to bring back the wretched people to a sense of their duty."

"I require no interference from you, Sir Thomas," answered the Captain doggedly; "mind your own affairs; and I tould you before, they will give you enough to do."

"This is my affair, Sir; it is the affair of every man who claims kindred with humanity, or who sincerely wishes to keep the peasantry of the country obedient to the laws, and faithful to their King,—but you, Captain Whaley,—you urge them on to ferocious retaliation."

"Be d—d sir! do you threaten us?"

"I do not; I merely suggest to you what may be the natural consequences of such scenes, and such acts; and I declare it as my opinion, that the scene and acts which I now behold are sufficient to drive our whole County into insurrection."

"O-ho! you'll call up the whole County against us, will you, Sir Thomas? Bear that in mind, men; he promises an insurrection through the whole County of Wexford."

As Sir Thomas turned on his heel in disgust, Saunders Smyly ran up to the magistrate-captain, his scourge in his hand.

"Well, Saunders, does the Croppy-hound give tongue, at last?"

"He does, plase your honour;" touching the instrument to the peak of his helmet, by way of salute, "but I'll spake in your honour's ear."

"Be d—d! do you tell me so? Aha! I knew there was something in his budget—coming against us, you say, ten thousand strong? Well, with daylight to help us, I'd scatther 'em like chaff."

"But now to garrison, your honour, till the day comes."

"Ay, Saunders; Ballybreehoone cavalry, prepare to mount."

There was a general rush to their horses.

"Tuck up this young rebel again, however, I'll tache him to keep sacrets."

"Before the Almighty, I declare," said the lad, gasping, when they were preparing once more to obey their captain's orders, "I know nothing, nothing, about the Croppy business. Oh, Captain Whaley! you ought to bring to mind that I don't; I have been at school with your son."

The sound of his voice acted upon his mother's shattered mind, as if the angel of intelligence and of mercy had shot through it a reorganizing spark. With a prolonged and piercing scream she sprang up from her crippled position, darted upon her son, caught his head between her hands, gazed wistfully into his features; and then, shrieking once more, till the rocky hill-side opposite rang to the fearful sound, she locked her arms so closely around the boy, that it seemed impossible to loose them, and both fell to the earth.

"Look there, Captain Whaley, and relent;" said Sir Thomas, the tears bursting from him.

"We're ready to march, your honour;" put in Saunders, anxious to be away from the threatened danger.

"I won't stir till this Croppy cur gets what's his due," answered Whaley; "tear her from him."

"The man that touches her must first cut me down," said Sir Thomas, bestriding the prostrate bodies of the mother and son.

Ruffian hands soon removed him, however, and others clutched the wretched woman. She struggled desperately, and her screams rose more terrifically than before. They were suddenly answered by a furious bellowing shout from the hill.

"Does your honour hear?" questioned Saunders; "they're comin' hot upon us."

"Mount, then," said the Captain, gaining his saddle; and he and the Ballybreehoone cavalry were soon beyond the village.

But no insurgent force came upon them. Saunders Smyly's victim only invented the story of the approach of ten thousand Croppies, in order to escape torture, and divert his torturers from the information he really could give; adding, that he had previously concealed the intelligence in the hopes of rescue and revenge at the hands of his friends, who would certainly surprise the yeomen in the village; but even the wished for revenge, could not inspire him with sufficient endurance to wait another moment for their coming.

The sudden shout from the hill seemed, indeed, to countenance his story; but the man himself had not expected it, and, in fact, knew not why it arose. We will explain it.

After sitting down in the little glen, and allowing his head to drop on his breast, Shawn-a-Gow indulged, for a considerable time, his dark and brooding silence. At last he spoke, without looking, to the as silent companion at his side.

"Tom! you have no house or home, my boy,—I must give up schoolin' you any longer; I'm a beggar myself in my ould days."

"It's not your son Tom is by you," answered one of his neighbours.

"Not Tom is by me? Why, I left him on this very spot, an' tould him to stop for me. Where is he gone to?"—after staring from under his darkly knit brow into the face of the person he addressed, and with a sudden choking in his bosom and throat, the smith half anticipated the tidings he was to receive.

"He tould me he'd go to seek out his mother, an' 'ud be back in a hurry, but it's now a long time since he went."

"How long?"

"Nigh-hand to an hour."

Shawn-a-Gow did not immediately speak again. He arose deliberately, and with some difficulty, from his sitting position. The man saw him slightly stagger as soon as he gained his feet; and then he slowly stretched out his arm from his body, his eyes not attending to its motion, and groped around and above his head, as if for something by which to support himself. A branch of the tree, under the shade of which he had been sitting, met his hand. He seized it, instinctively and desperately; and his neighbour, who still reclined on the turf, in contact with the smith's legs, felt the iron muscles quivering, and heard respirations, like the death-rattle, in his throat; while at each convulsion that passed through the father's giant frame, the branch by which he held cracked loud. and the whole tree shook.

"It was Tom I seen hangin' afore the blaze in his own house!" he at last muttered, in broken and woe-stricken accents—"Ay!"—

bursting into a gust of passion—"up it flamed, like the fires of hell, to make a bonfire for his death!"

Seized with some sudden and violent resolve, he now let go the branch and sprang forward, but his limbs failed him; he fell headlong, coming with a heavy sound to the earth, and striking his forehead against a sharp stone, which, unfelt and unheeded by him, inflicted a wound that bled profusely.

But it was not a puny faintness that caused his fall. Rather it was one that, reacting upon itself, could change into sternest strength and energy. He stood upright again in an instant, now firm on his legs; his neighbour saw him hurry down the little dell; and then the smith came upon a spot where some pikes ready mounted were concealed, armed himself with one of them, laboured up the hill, almost along the track by which he and Peter Rooney had first ascended, gained its summit as his wife's last dreadful screams arose over her half-strangled son; and his was the savage shout which had answered her, and which, repeated by the echoes of the rocky hill-side, had effectually scared away the Ballybreehoone cavalry.

And, like a baited bull broken loose from his stake, Shawn-a-Gow rushed down to the village, upon the group he yet saw surrounding the lime-tree. The dappled sky began to glow with the first light of morning, only to make more vivid to his rolling eye the blackened ruins of his home, and to prepare for his distinct observation the distorted features of that son, upon whom were concentrated almost the whole of the kindly affections that belonged to his iron nature.

Kitty Delouchery, alarmed for her mother, whose return to the hamlet she had witnessed, gained her side under the lime-tree the moment the yeomen had galloped away. By the gentle persuasion that women only know how to use, she unlocked her mother's arms from her brother's body. Indeed, the poor woman, again relapsed into stupefied insanity, had for some time mechanically held her grasp, and yet with a violence that perhaps may be assigned as the direct cause of the death of him she would have died to save.

As soon as her arms were loosened, she once more sank on the ground, torpid and insane as she had been before the lad's voice called her into temporary consciousness. Yet her manner and expression were different now. A wretched smile played round her mouth, and she mumbled rapidly and incoherently.

Kitty sat down behind her beloved brother, and, while her plentiful tears wetted his spasmed and discoloured face, held his drooping head on her lap. Sir Thomas Hartley busied himself in trying to restore the boy to life. He had removed the rascal cord from his fair and well-formed neck, and now stood over him, alter-

nately chafing his temples, and applying his finger to the feeble and irregular pulse that gave no hope to anxiety or exertion. One or two stragglers from the glen stood near.

Upon this group rushed Shawn-a-Gow, pike in hand. The fury of his mood, assisted by the yet imperfect light, rendered him indiscriminating, and he launched his weapon at the first person upon whom he fixed his eye. By an agile bound, one of his neighbours avoided instant death; the pike, grazing the man's lowered head, struck deep into the trunk of the tree that had been his son's gallows, and even the tug of Shawn's powerful arm could not at once pluck it back again.

Kitty, leaving her brother in Sir Thomas's care, sprang to Shawn-a-Gow, and, while he still strained to redeem his weapon, caught him round the body, and succeeded in persuading him that he was in the presence of friends.

"It's Sir Thomas Hartley, father dear, an' some o' the neighbours; they're come to comfort you."

"Comfort the duoul! I want no comfort. Where's Whaley's yeomen?"

"All gone, all gone, father."

"Well, another day for 'em. Bring me to your brother's corpse. I want to look at id. An' I'll look at id well an' close, the way I'll be able to tell 'em about id, when we've reckonin' for this night's work together."

"Tom isn't dead, father, dear," said Kitty, weeping at the false hope she gave; "Sir Thomas Hartley saved him for you."

"Tom isn't dead!—say that again, Kitty."

"He isn't, Sir! he isn't."

"Then show him to my eyes; hurry! hurry!"

"The Lord purtect us, father! there's blood on your own forehead."

"On me?" wiping it roughly from his brows, "blood? blood? what brought it on me? No matther; do what I bid you!"

She led him a step forward. He snatched up the dying lad. The sudden motion caused to glimmer, for a moment, the last spark of expiring life: the limbs quivered; the glassy eyes opened, and fixed in a dull stare; and, drawing a long and heavy sigh, he was a corse in his father's arms.

The smith gave not one groan, shed not one single tear, winked not once his red eye to discharge any rising moistures; but as, holding him at a little distance in his arms, he contemplated the discoloured features of his dead boy, the expression of his own blood-stained countenance was fearful and desperate.

Almost all the people of the hamlet had now returned from the little dell, and, in the expanding light of the morning, they crowded round the lime-tree. After prolonged silence, during which he

still continued to look upon his lost treasure, Shawn-a-Gow at length laid the body on the circular bench, and spoke in the same deep tones which he had used when from the hill-summit he beheld the roof of his cabin fall in.

"In the darkness o' the night I swore to burn for the burnin' done on me; in the light o' the mornin' I swear over again,—by the sowl o' that boy—that was as harmless an' as innocent as when he smiled up at me from his mother's breast." Shawn's voice faltered a little—"an' that is now in Heaven, listenin' to my oath.—I'll have blood for his blood—an' *that* in plenty—ay, Tom! in plenty."

"Whisht! whisht!" whispered Bridget Delouchery, recognizing the accents of her husband's voice; "whisht! isn't that Shawn-a-Gow I hear? och, ay, an' so it is!" and she slowly arose, crept timidly to him; and, as he finished speaking, her hand was on his arm.

"Jack," she continued to whisper, with a miserable smile, directing her lips to his ear, "there's a thing you must do; you're a bould, darin' man, an' never cared for fire or wather; they burnt the house on us;— bud there's the poor Tom! I locked him in the chest: dart in through the blaze, and pull him out!—You'll be swinged; but what matther? I'm swinged myself, or somethin' ails me, an' I don't mind id—see—I don't mind id."

"She's mad," said Shawn, putting her aside, after he had glanced down upon her face; "poor wake-hearted crature iv a woman, she's mad, an' where's the wondher? I won't forget that, either, in the reckonin'. D'ye hear me, every sowl," he continued, loudly addressing the throng, as he wrenched his pike from the tree; "say afther me, or rue id!" he grasped his pike aloft, "burnin', killin', an' slaughtherin' to the Orangemen! Slaughther an' ruin while there's one o' them left to be piked, or one iv us left to pike 'em!—slaughther an' ruin! say id!"

Some shouted out his pledge, some deeply muttered it, and but few shrank from the direful oath. There were two voices which distinctly rose above the mingled expression of feeling. Saunders Smyly's victim, now supported by his neighbours, screamed it high; and the cheer of Nale, who had led Captain Whaley to the depot of spikes under the anvil, exceeded every cheer around him.

Sir Thomas Hartley had remained mute, and, so much was he affected by the death of young Delouchery, almost an indifferent spectator of this scene, until Peter Rooney, making a bow, for which he was distinguished, and which, among his neighbours, gained him superior reputation for "manners," stepped up to the Baronet, and spoke as follows:

"It's a thing put upon us all, I may say, your honour, to stand

up, like sons o' green Ireland, an' fight for ourselves an' her; houses they won't lave us to live in;" pointing to the ruins; "or lives to live any where, guilty or innocent;" crossing his forehead, as he bent his head towards the corse. "It's a long time we were thinkin' o' the comin' o' this night, that's just a-passin' over us; an', whenever it 'ud come, yourself, Sir Thomas Hartley, the poor man's friend, an' the nath'ral head o' the parish, is the gintleman, we always said, would lade out the brave throops o' these parts to death, or a day o' glory, agin the murtherers."

"I must decline any such honour," said Sir Thomas, looking somewhat astonished at the little man.

"You've only too much o' the bashful, Sir Thomas," rejoined Peter, interpreting the Baronet's words to mean that he rejected the commission, only because it was too great an honour; "bud my way o' thinkin' is, that you're o' the sort fit to be a gineral in the army o' Finn-mac-cool, iv it was the will o' God we had sich a great haro alive at the prasant day, to fight for ould Ireland; an' I'll soon show your honour my mind on that head." Peter stepped upon the bench under the tree; and—"Hear, all o' ye, throops o' the Union!" he continued, "there's one to the fore we'll have for a commandher-in-chief, an' no livin' sowl but himsef, when we stand out on the green sod; an' that's Sir Thomas Hartley, of Hartley Coort, Barrowknight."

A general shout followed the announcement. Sir Thomas endeavoured to speak; but the people, acting on Peter Rooney's notion of his bashfulness, continued their deafening applause, and refused him a hearing. While their clamour still went on, they separated and repaired to their cabins, anxious to ascertain what plunder had been committed in their absence; and thus, for the present, he could not effectually pronounce a public negative upon the little tailor's nomination.

And now, glancing towards the bench under the lime-tree, Sir Thomas's attention became riveted by another interest. The smith, relapsed into deep and stern silence, stood leaning against the trunk, his face turned away from every object; his insane wife still squatted, mumbling, on the ground. Kitty sat at her dead brother's feet, holding her apron to her eyes, and swaying to and fro in unrestrained anguish. Some few neighbours, who had not retired with the rest, approached to remove the body to an adjacent house.

"Stop!" said the smith; "show him here again—it's the last time."

They held the corse across their arms, while he gazed on it.

"There, now," he resumed, his eye still dry, but his voice choking; "take him away, now, an' bury him; an' it's the woman must dig his grave, an' lay him in id the best they can; the men 'ill

have other work to do:" and, turning his back on his ruined dwelling, his wretched wife, his dead son, and his unprotected daughter, Shawn-a-Gow walked out of the hamlet.

Sir Thomas Hartley put a purse of gold into Kitty's hand, and whispering her to reckon on shelter and friendship under his roof, mounted his horse, and rode homeward slowly and mournfully.

END OF VOL. I.